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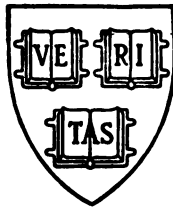
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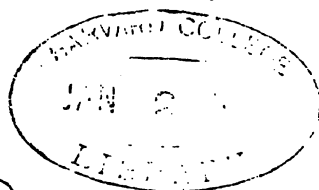
**A SELECTION FROM
HESPERIDES AND NOBLE NUMBERS**

**WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH**



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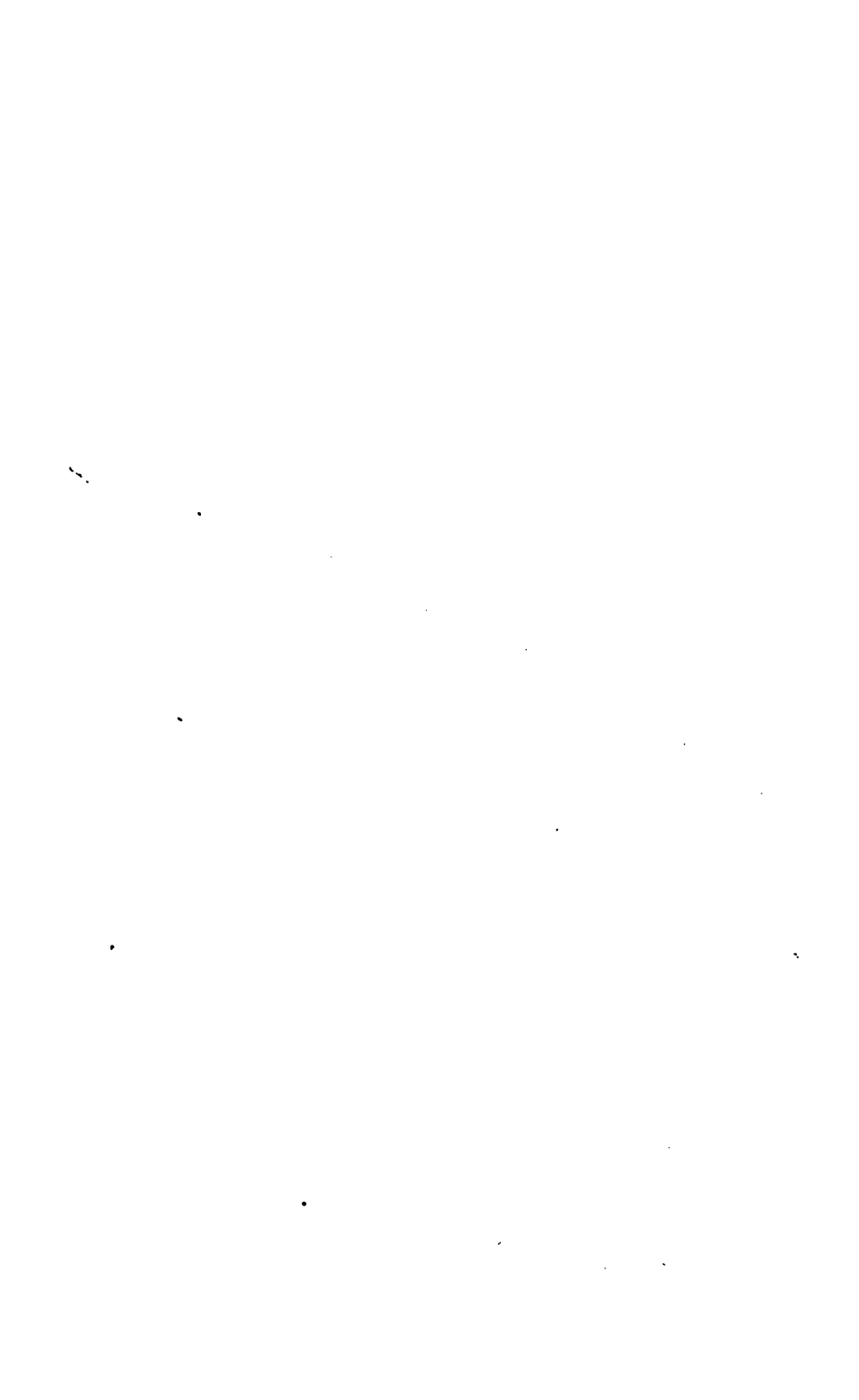
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NOTE

THE text of the "Hesperides" is comparatively free from those problems which delight the heart of the commentator. Nevertheless, the commentator has been diligent with his notes. He has found ample field for his industry in tracing Herrick's innumerable borrowings from Greek and Latin authors, and in materializing the various shadowy persons to whom the poet addressed many of his verses. In the present volume the annotation is restricted to brief definitions of such obsolete words and phrases as seem to demand explaining, and are not to be found in ordinary dictionaries and handbooks. The compiler of the glossary here records his indebtedness to the several editors of Herrick's complete works. The text generally followed in the poems is that of Mr. Pollard's admirable edition (1891)—the text that must necessarily be adopted, in the main, by all future editors of Herrick.



INTRODUCTION

A LITTLE over three hundred years ago England had given to her a poet of the very rarest lyrical quality, but she did not discover the fact for more than a hundred and fifty years afterward. The poet himself was aware of the fact at once, and stated it, perhaps not too modestly, in countless quatrains and couplets, which were not read, or, if read, were not much regarded at the moment. It has always been an incredulous world in this matter. So many poets have announced their arrival, and not arrived!

Robert Herrick was descended in a direct line from an ancient family in Lincolnshire, the Eyricks, a mentionable representative of which was John Eyrick of Leicester, the poet's grandfather, admitted freeman in 1535, and afterward twice made mayor of the town. John Eyrick, or Heyricke—he spelled his name recklessly—had five sons, the second of which sought a career in London, where he became a goldsmith, and in December, 1582, married Julian Stone, spin-

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ster, of Bedfordshire, a sister to Anne, Lady Soame, the wife of Sir Stephen Soame. One of the many children of this marriage was Robert Herrick. It is the common misfortune of the poet's biographers, though it was the poet's own great good fortune, that the personal interviewer was an unknown quantity at the period when Herrick played his part on the stage of life. Of that performance, in its intimate aspects, we have only the slightest record.

Robert Herrick was born in Wood Street, Cheapside, London, in 1591, and baptized at St. Vedast's, Foster Lane, on August 24 of that year. He had several brothers and sisters, with whom we shall not concern ourselves. It would be idle to add the little we know about these persons to the little we know about Herrick himself. He is a sufficient problem without dragging in the rest of the family.

When the future lyricist was fifteen months old, his father, Nicholas Herrick, made his will, and immediately fell out of an upper window. Whether or not this fall was an intended sequence to the will the high almoner, Dr. Fletcher, Bishop of Bristol, promptly put in his claim to the estate, "all

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goods and chattels of suicides" becoming his by law. The circumstances were suspicious, though not conclusive, and the good bishop, after long litigation, consented to refer the case to arbitrators, who awarded him two hundred and twenty pounds, thus leaving the question at issue—whether or not Herrick's death had been his own premeditated act—still wrapped in its original mystery. This singular law, which had the possible effect of inducing high almoners to encourage suicide among well-to-do persons of the lower and middle classes, was afterward rescinded. Nicholas Herrick did not leave his household destitute, for his estate amounted to five thousand pounds, that is to say, twenty-five thousand pounds in to-day's money; but there were many mouths to feed. The poet's two uncles, Robert Herrick and William Herrick of Beaumanor, the latter subsequently knighted¹ for his usefulness as jeweler and money-

¹ Dr. Grosart, in his interesting and valuable "Memorial-Introduction" to Herrick's poems, quotes this curious item from Winwood's "Memorials of Affairs of State": "On Easter Tuesday [1605], one Mr. William Herrick, a goldsmith in Cheapside, was Knighted for making a Hole in the great Diamond the King doth wear. The party little expected the honour, but he did his work so well as won the King to an extraordinary liking of it."

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lender to James I, were appointed guardians to the children.

Young Robert appears to have attended school in Westminster until his fifteenth year, when he was apprenticed to Sir William, who had learned the gentle art of goldsmith from his nephew's father. Though Robert's indentures bound him for ten years, Sir William is supposed to have offered no remonstrance when he was asked, long before that term expired, to cancel the engagement and allow Robert to enter Cambridge, which he did as fellow-commoner at St. John's College. At the end of two years he transferred himself to Trinity Hall, with a view to economy and the pursuit of the law—the two frequently go together. He received his degree of B.A. in 1617, and his M.A. in 1620, having relinquished the law for the arts.

During this time he was assumed to be in receipt of a quarterly allowance of ten pounds—a not illiberal provision, the pound being then five times its present value; but as the payments were eccentric, the master of arts was in recurrent distress. If this money came from his own share of his father's estate, as seems likely, Herrick had

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cause for complaint; if otherwise, the pith is taken out of his grievance. The Iliad of his financial woes at this juncture is told in a few chance-preserved letters written to his "most careful uncle," as he calls that evidently thrifty person. In one of these monotonous and dreary epistles, which are signed "R. Hearick," the writer says: "The essence of my writing is (as heretofore) to entreat you to paye for my use to Mr. Arthour Johnson, bookseller, in Paule's Churchyarde, the ordinarie sume of tenn pounds, and that with as much sceleritie as you maye." He also indulges in the natural wish that his college bills "had leaden wings and tortice feet." This was in 1617. The young man's patrimony, whatever it may have been, had dwindled; and he confesses to "many a throe and pinches of the purse." For the moment, at least, his prospects were not flattering.

Robert Herrick's means of livelihood, when in 1620 he quitted the university and went up to London, are conjectural. It is clear that he was not without some resources, since he did not starve to death on his wits before he discovered a patron in the Earl of Pembroke. In the court

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circle Herrick also unearthed humbler, but perhaps not less useful, allies in the persons of Edward Norgate, clerk of the signet, and Master John Crofts, cup-bearer to the king. Through the two New Year anthems, honored by the music of Henry Lawes, his Majesty's organist at Westminster, it is more than possible that Herrick was brought to the personal notice of Charles and Henrietta Maria. All this was a promise of success, but not success itself. It has been thought probable that Herrick may have secured some minor office in the chapel at Whitehall. That would accord with his subsequent appointment (September, 1627) as chaplain to the Duke of Buckingham's unfortunate expedition to the Isle of Rhé. Precisely when Herrick was invested with holy orders is not ascertainable. If one may draw an inference from his poems, the life he led meanwhile was not such as his "most careful uncle" would have warmly approved. The literary clubs and coffee-houses of the day were open to a free-lance like young Herrick, some of whose blithe measures, passing in manuscript from hand to hand, had brought him faintly to light as a poet. The "Dog" and

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the "Triple Tun " were not places devoted to worship, unless it were to the worship of "rare Ben Jonson," at whose feet Herrick now sat, with the other blossoming young poets of the season. He was a faithful disciple to the end, and addressed many loving lyrics to the master, of which not the least graceful is "His Prayer to Ben Jonson ":

When I a verse shall make,
Know I have praid thee
For old religion's sake,
Saint Ben, to aide me.

Make the way smooth for me,
When I, thy Herrick,
Honouring thee, on my knee
Offer my lyric.

Candles I 'll give to thee,
And a new altar;
And thou, Saint Ben, shalt be
Writ in my Psalter.

On September 30, 1629, Charles I, at the recommending of the Earl of Exeter, presented Herrick with the vicarage of Dean Prior, near Totnes, in Devonshire. Here he was destined to pass the next nineteen years of his life among surroundings not congenial. For Herrick to be a mile away from London stone was for Herrick to be in

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exile. Even with railway and telegraphic interruptions from the outside world, the dullness of a provincial English town of to-day is something formidable. The dullness of a sequestered English hamlet in the early part of the seventeenth century must have been appalling. One is dimly conscious of a belated throb of sympathy for Robert Herrick. Yet, however discontented or unhappy he may have been at first in that lonely vicarage, the world may congratulate itself on the circumstances that stranded him there, far from the distractions of the town, and with no other solace than his Muse, for there it was he wrote the greater number of the poems which were to make his fame. It is to this accidental banishment to Devon that we owe the cluster of exquisite pieces descriptive of obsolete rural manners and customs—the Christmas masks, the Twelfth-night mummeries, the morris-dances, and the May-day festivals. The November following Herrick's appointment to the benefice was marked by the death of his mother, who left him no heavier legacy than "a ringe of twenty shillings." Perhaps this was an understood arrange-

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ment between them; but it is to be observed that, though Herrick was a spend-thrift in epitaphs, he wasted no funeral lines on Julian Herrick. In the matter of verse he dealt generously with his family down to the latest nephew. One of his most charming and touching poems is entitled "To His Dying Brother, Master William Herrick," a posthumous son. There appear to have been two brothers named William. The younger, who died early, is supposed to be referred to here.

The story of Herrick's existence at Dean Prior is as vague and bare of detail as the rest of the narrative. His parochial duties must have been irksome to him, and it is to be imagined that he wore his cassock lightly. As a preparation for ecclesiastical life he forswore sack and poetry; but presently he was with the Muse again, and his farewell to sack was in a strictly Pickwickian sense. Herrick had probably accepted the vicarship as he would have accepted a lieutenancy in a troop of horse—with an eye to present emolument and future promotion. The promotion never came, and the emolument was nearly as scant as that of Goldsmith's parson, who considered him-

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self "passing rich with forty pounds a year"—a height of optimism beyond the reach of Herrick, with his expensive town wants and habits. But fifty pounds—the salary of his benefice—and possible perquisites in the way of marriage and burial fees would enable him to live for the time being. It was better than a possible nothing a year in London.

Herrick's religious convictions were assuredly not deeper than those of the average layman. Various writers have taken a different view of the subject; but it is inconceivable that a clergyman with a fitting sense of his function could have written certain of the poems which Herrick afterward gave to the world—those astonishing epigrams upon his rustic enemies, and those habitual bridal compliments which, among his personal friends, must have added a terror to matrimony. Had he written only in that vein the posterity which he so often invoked with pathetic confidence would not have greatly troubled itself about him. It cannot positively be asserted that all the verses in question relate to the period of his incumbency, for none of his verse is dated, with the exception of the "Dialogue betwixt Horace and

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Lydia." The date of some of the compositions may be arrived at by induction. The religious pieces grouped under the title of "Noble Numbers" distinctly associate themselves with Dean Prior, and have little other interest. Very few of them are "born of the royal blood." They lack the inspiration and magic of his secular poetry, and are frequently so fantastical and grotesque as to stir a suspicion touching the absolute soundness of Herrick's mind at all times. The lines in which the Supreme Being is assured that he may read Herrick's poems without taking any tincture from their sinfulness might have been written in a retreat for the unbalanced. "For unconscious impiety," remarks Mr. Edmund Gosse,¹ "this rivals the famous passage in which Robert Montgomery exhorted God to 'pause and think.'" Elsewhere, in an apostrophe to "Heaven," Herrick says:

Let mercy be
So kind to set me free,
And I will straight
Come in, or force the gate.

In any event, the poet did not propose to be left out!

¹ In "Seventeenth-Century Studies."

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Relative to the inclusion of unworthy pieces and the general absence of arrangement in the "Hesperides," Dr. Grosart advances the theory that the printers exercised arbitrary authority on these points. Dr. Grosart assumes that Herrick kept the epigrams and personal tributes in manuscript books separate from the rest of the work, which would have made a too slender volume by itself, and on the plea of this slenderness was induced to trust the two collections to the publisher, "whereupon he or some unskilled subordinate proceeded to intermix these additions with the others. That the poet himself had nothing to do with the arrangement or disarrangement lies on the surface." This is an amiable supposition, but merely a supposition. Herrick personally placed the "copy" in the hands of John Williams and Francis Eglesfield, and if he were over-persuaded to allow them to print unfit verses, and to observe no method whatever in the contents of the book, the discredit is none the less his. It is charitable to believe that Herrick's coarseness was not the coarseness of the man, but of the time, and that he followed the fashion *malgré lui*. With

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regard to the fairy poems, they should have been given in sequence; but if there are careless printers, there are also authors who are careless in the arrangement of their manuscript, a kind of task, moreover, in which Herrick was wholly unpractised, and might easily have made mistakes. The "Hesperides" was his sole publication.

Herrick was now thirty-eight years of age. Of his personal appearance at this time we have no description. The portrait of him prefixed to the original edition of his works belongs to a much later moment. Whether or not the bovine features in Marshall's engraving are a libel on the poet, it is to be regretted that oblivion has not laid its erasing finger on that singularly unpleasant counterfeit presentment. It is interesting to note that this same Marshall engraved the head of Milton for the first collection of his miscellaneous poems—the precious 1645 volume containing "Il Penseroso," "Lycidas," "Comus," etc. The plate gave great offense to the serious-minded young Milton, not only because it represented him as an elderly person, but because of certain minute figures of peasant lads and lassies who

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are very indistinctly seen dancing frivolously under the trees in the background. Herrick had more reason to protest. The aggressive face bestowed upon him by the artist lends an air of veracity to the tradition that the vicar occasionally hurled the manuscript of his sermon at the heads of his drowsy parishioners, accompanying the missive with pregnant remarks. He has the aspect of one meditating assault and battery. To offset the picture there is much indirect testimony to the amiability of the man, aside from the evidence furnished by his own writings. He exhibits a fine trait in the poem on the Bishop of Lincoln's imprisonment—a poem full of deference and tenderness for a person who had evidently injured the writer, probably by opposing him in some affair of church preferment. Anthony Wood says that Herrick "became much beloved by the gentry in these parts for his florid and witty [wise] discourses." It appears that he was fond of animals, and had a pet spaniel called Tracy, which did not get away without a couplet attached to him:

Now thou art dead, no eye shall ever see
For shape and service spaniell like to thee.

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Among the exile's chance acquaintances was a sparrow, whose elegy he also sings, comparing the bird to Lesbia's sparrow, much to the latter's disadvantage. All of Herrick's geese were swans. On the authority of Dorothy King, the daughter of a woman who served Herrick's successor at Dean Prior, we are told that the poet kept a pig, which he had taught to drink out of a tankard—a kind of instruction he was admirably qualified to impart. Dorothy was in her ninety-ninth year when she communicated this fact to Mr. Barron Field, the author of the paper on Herrick published in the "Quarterly Review" for August, 1810, and in the Boston edition¹ of the "Hesperides" attributed to Southey.

What else do we know of the vicar? A very favorite theme with Herrick was Herrick. Scattered through his book are no fewer than twenty-five pieces entitled "On Himself," not to mention numberless autobiographical hints under other captions.

¹ The "Biographical Notice" prefacing this volume of "The British Poets" is a remarkable production, grammatically and chronologically. On page 7 the writer speaks of Herrick as living "in habits of intimacy" with Ben Jonson in 1648. If that was the case, Herrick must have taken up his quarters in Westminster Abbey, for Jonson had been dead eleven years.

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They are merely hints, throwing casual sidelights on his likes and dislikes, and illuminating his vanity. A whimsical personage without any very definite outlines might be evolved from these fragments. I picture him as a sort of Samuel Pepys, with perhaps less quaintness, and the poetical temperament added. Like the prince of gossips, too, he somehow gets at your affections. In one place Herrick laments the threatened failure of his eyesight (quite in what would have been Pepys's manner had Pepys written verse), and in another place he tells us of the loss of a finger. The quatrain treating of this latter catastrophe is as fantastic as some of Dr. Donne's *conceits*:

One of the five straight branches of my hand
Is lopt already, and the rest but stand
Expecting when to fall, which soon will be:
First dies the leafe, the bough next, next the tree.

With all his great show of candor, Herrick really reveals as little of himself as ever poet did. One thing, however, is manifest—he understood and loved music. None but a lover could have said:

The mellow touch of musick most doth wound
The soule when it doth rather sigh than sound.

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Or this to Julia:

So smooth, so sweet, so silvery is thy voice,
As could they hear, the damn'd would make no
noise,

But listen to thee walking in thy chamber
Melting melodious words to lutes of amber.

. . . Then let me lye
Entranc'd, and lost confusedly;
And by thy musick stricken mute,
Die, and be turn'd into a lute.

Herrick never married. His modest Devonshire establishment was managed by a maid-servant named Prudence Baldwin. "Fate likes fine names," says Lowell. That of Herrick's maid-of-all-work was certainly a happy meeting of gentle vowels and consonants, and has had the good fortune to be embalmed in the amber of what may be called a joyous little threnody:

In this little urne is laid
Prewdence Baldwin, once my maid;
From whose happy spark here let
Spring the purple violet.

Herrick addressed a number of poems to her before her death, which seems to have deeply touched him in his loneliness. We shall not allow a pleasing illusion to be dis-

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turbed by the flippancy of an old writer who says that "Prue was but indifferently qualified to be a tenth muse." She was a faithful handmaid, and had the merit of causing Herrick in this octave to strike a note of sincerity not usual with him:

These summer-birds did with thy master stay
The times of warmth, but then they flew away,
Leaving their poet, being now grown old,
Expos'd to all the coming winter's cold.
But thou, kind Prew, didst with my fates abide
As well the winter's as the summer's tide:
For which thy love, live with thy master here,
Not two, but all the seasons of the year.

Thus much have I done for thy memory,
Mistress Prue!

In spite of Herrick's disparagement of Deanbourn, which he calls "a rude river," and his characterization of Devon folk as "a people currish, churlish as the seas," the fullest and pleasantest days of his life were probably spent at Dean Prior. He was not unmindful meanwhile of the gathering political storm that was to shake England to its foundations. How anxiously, in his solitude, he watched the course of events, is attested by many of his poems. This

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solitude was not without its compensation.
"I confess," he says,

I ne'er invented such
Ennobled numbers for the presse
Than where I loath'd so much.

A man is never wholly unhappy when he is writing verses. Herrick was firmly convinced that each new lyric was a stone added to the pillar of his fame, and perhaps his sense of relief was tinged with indefinable regret when he found himself suddenly deprived of his benefice. The integrity of some of his royalistic poems is doubtful; but he was not given the benefit of the doubt by the Long Parliament, which ejected the panegyrist of young Prince Charles from the vicarage of Dean Prior, and installed in his place the venerable John Symes, a gentleman with pronounced Cromwellian views.

Herrick snapped his fingers metaphorically at the Puritans, discarded his clerical habiliments, and hastened to London to pick up such as were left of the gay-colored threads of his old experience there. Once more he would drink sack at the Triple Tun, once more he would breathe the air

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breathed by such poets and wits as Cotton, Denham, Shirley, Selden, and the rest. "Yes, by Saint Anne! and ginger shall be hoti' the mouth too." In the gladness of getting back "from the dull confines of the drooping west," he writes a glowing apostrophe to London—that "stony stepmother to poets." He claims to be a free-born Roman, and is proud to find himself a citizen again. According to his earlier biographers, Herrick had much ado not to starve in that same longed-for London, and fell into great misery; but Dr. Grosart disputes this, arguing, with justness, that Herrick's family, which was wealthy and influential, would not have allowed him to come to abject want. With his royalistic tendencies he may not have breathed quite freely in the atmosphere of the Commonwealth, and no doubt many tribulations fell to his lot, but among them was not poverty. The poet was now engaged in preparing his works for the press, and a few weeks following his return to London they were issued in a single volume with the title "Hesperides; or, The Works both Humane and Divine of Robert Herrick, Esq."

The time was not ready for him. A new era had dawned—the era of the common-

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place. The interval was come when Shakspeare himself was to lie in a kind of twilight. Herrick was in spirit an Elizabethan, and had strayed by chance into an artificial and prosaic age—a sylvan singing creature alighting on an alien planet. “He was too natural,” says Mr. Palgrave in his “Chrysomela,” “too purely poetical; he had not the learned polish, the political allusion, the tone of the city, the didactic turn, which were then and onward demanded from poetry.” Yet it is strange that a public which had a relish for Edmund Waller should neglect a poet who was fifty times finer than Waller in his own specialty. What poet then, or in the half-century that followed the Restoration, could have written “Corinna’s Going a-Maying,” or approached in kind the ineffable grace and perfection to be found in a score of Herrick’s lyrics?

The “Hesperides” was received with chilling indifference. None of Herrick’s great contemporaries has left a consecrating word concerning it. The book was not reprinted during the author’s lifetime, and for more than a century after his death Herrick was virtually unread. In 1796 the

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"Gentleman's Magazine" copied a few of the poems, and two years later Dr. Nathan Drake published in his "Literary Hours" three critical papers on the poet, with specimens of his writings. Dr. Johnson omitted him from the "Lives of the Poets," though space was found for half a score of poets whose names are to be found nowhere else. In 1810 Dr. Nott, a physician of Bristol, issued a small volume of selections. It was not until 1823 that Herrick was reprinted in full. It remained for the taste of our own day to multiply editions of him.

In order to set the seal to Herrick's fame, it is now only needful that some wiseacre should attribute the authorship of the poems to some man who could not possibly have written a line of them. The opportunity presents attractions that ought to be irresistible. Excepting a handful of Herrick's college letters there is no scrap of his manuscript extant; the men who drank and jested with the poet at the Dog or the Triple Tun make no reference¹ to

¹ With possibly the single exception of the writer of some verses in the "*Musarum Deliciae*" (1656), who mentions

"that old sack
Young Herrick took to entertain
The Muses in a sprightly vein."

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him; and in the wide parenthesis formed by his birth and death we find as little tangible incident as is discoverable in the briefer span of Shakspeare's fifty-two years. Here is material for profundity and ciphers!

Herrick's second sojourn in London covered the period between 1648 and 1662, during which interim he fades from sight, excepting for the instant when he is publishing his book. If he engaged in further literary work there are no evidences of it beyond one contribution to the "*Lacrymae Musarum*" in 1649. He seems to have had lodgings, for a while at least, in St. Anne's, Westminster. With the court in exile and the grim Roundheads seated in the seats of the mighty, it was no longer the merry London of his early manhood. Time and war had thinned the ranks of friends; in the old haunts, the old familiar faces were wanting. Ben Jonson was dead, Waller banished, and many another comrade "in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes." As Herrick walked through crowded Cheapside or along the dingy river-bank in those years, his thought must have turned more than once to the little vicarage in Devonshire, and lingered tenderly.

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On the accession of Charles II a favorable change of wind wafted Herrick back to his former moorings at Dean Prior, the obnoxious Symys having been turned adrift. This occurred on August 24, 1662, the seventy-first anniversary of the poet's baptism. Of Herrick's movements after that tradition does not furnish even the shadow of an outline. The only notable event concerning him is recorded twelve years later in the parish register: "Robert Herrick, vicker, was buried ye 15th day October, 1674." He was eighty-three years old. The location of his grave is unknown. In 1857 a monument to his memory was erected in Dean Church. And this is all.

The details that have come down to us touching Herrick's private life are as meager as if he had been a Marlowe or a Shakespeare. But were they as ample as could be desired they would still be unimportant compared with the single fact that in 1648 he gave to the world his "Hesperides." The environments of the man were accidental and transitory. The significant part of him we have, and that is enduring so long as wit, fancy, and melodious numbers hold a charm for mankind.

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A fine thing incomparably said instantly becomes familiar, and has henceforth a sort of dateless excellence. Though it may have been said three hundred years ago, it is as modern as yesterday; though it may have been said yesterday, it has the trick of seeming to have been always in our keeping. This quality of remoteness and nearness belongs, in a striking degree, to Herrick's poems. They are as novel to-day as they were on the lips of a choice few of his contemporaries, who, in reading them in their freshness, must surely have been aware here and there of the ageless grace of old idyllic poets dead and gone.

Herrick was the bearer of no heavy message to the world, and such message as he had he was apparently in no hurry to deliver. On this point he somewhere says:

Let others to the printing-press run fast;
Since after death comes glory, I'll not haste.

He had need of his patience, for he was long detained on the road by many of those obstacles that waylay poets on their journeys to the printer. Herrick was nearly sixty years old when he published the "Hesperides." It was, I repeat, no

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heavy message, and the bearer was left an unconscionable time to cool his heels in the antechamber. Though his pieces had been set to music by such composers as Lawes, Ramsay, and Lanieri, and his court poems had naturally won favor with the Cavalier party, Herrick cut but a small figure at the side of several of his rhyming contemporaries who are now forgotten. It sometimes happens that the light love-song, reaching few or no ears at its first singing, outlasts the seemingly more prosperous ode which, dealing with some passing phase of thought, social or political, gains the instant applause of the multitude. In most cases the timely ode is somehow apt to fade with the circumstance that inspired it, and becomes the yesterday's editorial of literature. Oblivion likes especially to get hold of occasional poems. That makes it hard for feeble poets laureate.

Mr. Henry James once characterized Alphonse Daudet as "a great little novelist." Robert Herrick is a great little poet. The brevity of his poems—for he wrote nothing *de longue haleine*—would place him among the minor singers; his workmanship places him among the masters.

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The Herricks were not a family of goldsmiths and lapidaries for nothing. The accurate touch of the artificer in jewels and costly metals was one of the gifts transmitted to Robert Herrick. Much of his work is as exquisite and precise as the chasing on a dagger-hilt by Cellini; the line has nearly always that vine-like fluency which seems impromptu, and is never the result of anything but austere labor. The critic who called these carefully wrought poems "wood-notes wild" mistook his vocation. They are full of subtle simplicity. Here we come across a stanza as severely cut as an antique cameo,—the stanza, for instance, in which the poet speaks of his lady-love's "winter face,"—and there a couplet that breaks into unfading daffodils and violets. The art, though invisible, is always there. His amatory songs and catches are such poetry as Orlando would have liked to hang on the boughs in the forest of Arden. None of the work is hastily done, not even that portion of it we could wish had not been done at all. Be the motive grave or gay, it is given that faultlessness of form which distinguishes everything in literature that has

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survived its own period. There is no such thing as "form" alone; it is only the close-grained material that takes the highest finish. The structure of Herrick's verse, like that of Blake, is simple to the verge of innocence. Such rhythmic intricacies as those of Shelley, Tennyson, and Swinburne he never dreamed of. But his manner has this perfection: it fits his matter as the cup of the acorn fits its meat.

Of passion, in the deeper sense, Herrick has little or none. Here are no "tears from the depth of some divine despair," no probings into the tragic heart of man, no insight that goes much farther than the pathos of a cowslip on a maiden's grave. The tendrils of his verse reach up to the light, and love the warmer side of the garden wall. But the reader who does not detect the seriousness under the lightness misreads Herrick. Nearly all true poets have been wholesome and joyous singers. A pessimistic poet, like the poisonous ivy, is one of nature's sarcasms. In his own bright pastoral way Herrick must always remain unexcelled. His limitations are certainly narrow, but they leave him in the sunshine. Neither in his thought nor in his utterance is there any complexity; both are as pel-

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lucid as a woodland pond, content to duplicate the osiers and ferns, and, by chance, the face of a girl straying near its crystal. His is no troubled stream in which large trout are caught. He must be accepted on his own terms.

The greatest poets have, with rare exceptions, been the most indebted to their predecessors or to their contemporaries. It has wittily been remarked that only mediocrity is ever wholly original. Impressionability is one of the conditions of the creative faculty: the sensitive mind is the only mind that invents. What the poet reads, sees, and feels, goes into his blood, and becomes an ingredient of his originality. The color of his thought instinctively blends itself with the color of its affinities. A writer's style, if it have distinction, is the outcome of a hundred styles. Though a generous borrower of the ancients, Herrick appears to have been exceptionally free from the influence of contemporary minds. Here and there in his work are traces of his beloved Ben Jonson, or fleeting impressions of Fletcher, and in one instance a direct infringement on Suckling; but the sum of Herrick's obligations in this sort is inconsiderable. This indifference to other

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writers of his time, this insularity, was doubtless his loss. The more exalted imagination of Vaughan or Marvell or Herbert might have taught him a deeper note than he sounded in his purely devotional poems. Milton, of course, moved in a sphere apart. Shakspeare, whose personality still haunted the clubs and taverns which Herrick frequented on his first going up to London, failed to lay any appreciable spell upon him. That great name, moreover, is a jewel which finds no setting in Herrick's rhyme. His general reticence relative to brother poets is extremely curious when we reflect on his penchant for addressing four-line epics to this or that individual. They were, in the main, obscure individuals, whose identity is scarcely worth establishing. His London life, at two different periods, brought him into contact with many of the celebrities of the day; but his verse has helped to confer immortality on very few of them. That his verse had the secret of conferring immortality was one of his unshaken convictions. Shakspeare had not a finer confidence when he wrote:

Not marble nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,

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than has Herrick whenever he speaks of his own poetry, and he is not by any means backward in speaking of it. It was the breath of his nostrils. Without his Muse those nineteen years in that dull, secluded Devonshire village would have been unendurable.

His poetry has the value and the defect of that seclusion. In spite, however, of his contracted horizon there is great variety in Herrick's themes. Their scope cannot be stated so happily as he has stated it:

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds and bowers,
Of April, May, of June, and July-flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes;
I write of Youth, of Love, and have access
By these to sing of cleanly wantonness;
I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece
Of balm, of oil, of spice and ambergris;
I sing of times trans-shifting, and I write
How roses first came red and lilies white;
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The Court of Mab, and of the Fairy King;
I write of Hell; I sing (and ever shall)
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all.

Never was there so pretty a table of contents! When you open his book the breath of the English rural year fans your cheek;

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the pages seem to exhale wildwood and meadow smells, as if sprigs of tansy and lavender had been shut up in the volume and forgotten. One has a sense of hawthorn hedges and wide-spreading oaks, of open lead-set lattices half hidden with honeysuckle; and distant voices of the hay-makers, returning home in the rosy after-glow, fall dreamily on one's ear, as sounds should fall when fancy listens. There is no English poet so thoroughly English as Herrick. He painted the country life of his own time as no other has painted it at any time. It is to be remarked that the majority of English poets regarded as national have sought their chief inspiration in almost every land and period excepting their own. Shakspeare went to Italy, Denmark, Greece, Egypt, and to many a hitherto unfooted region of the imagination, for plot and character. It was not Whitehall Garden, but the Garden of Eden and the celestial spaces, that lured Milton. It is the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "The Eve of St. Agnes," and the noble fragment of "Hyperion" that have given Keats his spacious niche in the gallery of England's poets. Shelley's two master-

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pieces, "Prometheus Unbound" and "The Cenci," belong respectively to Greece and Italy. Browning's "The Ring and the Book" is Italian; Tennyson wandered to the land of myth for the "Idylls of the King"; and Matthew Arnold's "Sohrab and Rustum"—a narrative poem second in dignity to none produced in the nineteenth century—is a Persian story. But Herrick's "golden apples" sprang from the soil in his own day, and reddened in the mist and sunshine of his native island.

Even the fairy poems, which must be classed by themselves, are not wanting in local flavor. Herrick's fairy world is an immeasurable distance from that of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Puck and Titania are of finer breath than Herrick's little folk, who may be said to have Devonshire manners and to live in a miniature England of their own. Like the magician who summons them from nowhere, they are fond of color and perfume and substantial feasts, and indulge in heavy draughts—from the cups of morning-glories. In the tiny sphere they inhabit everything is marvelously adapted to their requirement; nothing is out of proportion

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or out of perspective. The elves are a strictly religious people in their winsome way, "part pagan, part papistical"; they have their pardons and indulgences, their psalters and chapels, and

An apple's core is hung up dried,
With rattling kernels, which is rung
To call to morn- and even-song;

and very conveniently,

Hard by, i' th' shell of half a nut,
The holy water there is put.

It is all delightfully naïve and fanciful, this elfin-world, where the impossible does not strike one as incongruous, and the England of 1648 seems never very far away.

It is only among the apparently unpremeditated lyrical flights of the Elizabethan dramatists that one meets with anything like the lilt and liquid flow of Herrick's songs. While in no degree Shaksperian echoes, there are epithalamia and dirges of his that might properly have fallen from the lips of Posthumus in "Cymbeline." This delicate epicede would have fitted Imogen:

Here a solemn fast we keepe
While all beauty lyes asleepe;

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Husht be all things; *no noyse here*
But the toning of a teàre,
Or a sigh of such as bring
Cowslips for her covering.

Many of the pieces are purely dramatic in essence; the "Mad Maid's Song," for example. The lyrist may speak in character, like the dramatist. A poet's lyrics may be, as most of Browning's are, just so many *dramatis personæ*. "Enter a Song singing" is the stage-direction in a seventeenth-century play whose name escapes me. The sentiment dramatized in a lyric is not necessarily a personal expression. In one of his couplets Herrick neatly denies that his more mercurial utterances are intended presentations of himself:

To his Book's end this last line he 'd have
placed —
Jocund his Muse was, but his Life was chaste.

In point of fact he was a whole group of imaginary lovers in one. Silvia, Anthea, Electra, Perilla, Perenna, and the rest of those lively ladies ending in *a*, were doubtless, for the most part, but airy phantoms dancing—as they should not have danced—through the brain of a sentimental old

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bachelor who happened to be a vicar of the Church of England. Even with his overplus of heart it would have been quite impossible for him to have had enough to go round had there been so numerous actual demands upon it.

Thus much may be conceded to Herrick's verse: at its best it has wings that carry it nearly as close to heaven's gate as any of Shakspeare's lark-like interludes. The brevity of the poems and their uniform smoothness sometimes produce the effect of monotony. The crowded richness of the line advises a desultory reading. But one must go back to them again and again. They bewitch the memory, having once caught it, and insist on saying themselves over and over. Among the poets of England the author of the "Hesperides" remains, and is likely to remain, unique. As Shakspeare stands alone in his vast domain, so Herrick stands alone in his scanty plot of ground.

Shine, Poet! in thy place, and be content.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

.

HESPERIDES



HESPERIDES

1

THE ARGUMENT OF HIS BOOK

I SING of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and
 bowers,
Of April, May, of June and July flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails,
 wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal
 cakes;
I write of youth, of love, and have access
By these to sing of cleanly wantonness;
I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece
Of balm, of oil, of spice and ambergris;
I sing of times transshifting, and I write
How roses first came red and lilies white;
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The Court of Mab, and of the fairy king;
I write of Hell; I sing (and ever shall)
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all.

2

TO HIS MUSE

WHITHER, mad maiden, wilt thou roam?
Far safer 't were to stay at home,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Where thou mayst sit and piping please
The poor and private cottages,
Since cotes and hamlets best agree
With this thy meaner minstrelsy.
There with the reed thou mayst express
The shepherd's fleecy happiness,
And with thy eclogues intermix
Some smooth and harmless bucolics.
There on a hillock thou mayst sing
Unto a handsome shepherdling,
Or to a girl (that keeps the neat)
With breath more sweet than violet.
There, there, perhaps, such lines as these
May take the simple villages;
But for the court, the country wit
Is despicable unto it.
Stay, then, at home, and do not go
Or fly abroad to seek for woe.
Contempts in courts and cities dwell,
No critic haunts the poor man's cell,
Where thou mayst hear thine own lines read
By no one tongue there censured.
That man 's unwise will search for ill,
And may prevent it, sitting still.

3

TO HIS BOOK

WHILE thou didst keep thy candor undefil'd,
Dearly I lov'd thee as my first-born child,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

But when I saw thee wantonly to roam
From house to house, and never stay at
home,
I broke my bonds of love, and bade thee go,
Regardless whether well thou sped'st or no.
On with thy fortunes then, whate'er they be:
If good, I 'll smile; if bad, I 'll sigh for thee.

4

ANOTHER

To read my book the virgin shy
May blush while Brutus standeth by,
But when he 's gone, read through what 's
writ,
And never stain a cheek for it.

5

WHEN HE WOULD HAVE HIS VERSES READ

In sober mornings, do not thou rehearse
The holy incantation of a verse;
But when that men have both well drunk
and fed,
Let my enchantments then be sung or read.
When laurel spirits i' th' fire, and when the
hearth
Smiles to itself, and gilds the roof with
mirth;

3

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

When up the thyrse is rais'd, and when the
 sound
Of sacred orgies flies, a round, a round;
When the rose reigns, and locks with oint-
 ments shine,
Let rigid Cato read these lines of mine.

6

UPON JULIA'S RECOVERY

DROOP, droop no more, or hang the head,
Ye roses almost withered;
Now strength and newer purple get,
Each here declining violet.
O primroses! let this day be
A resurrection unto ye;
And to all flowers alli'd in blood,
Or sworn to that sweet sisterhood:
For health on Julia's cheek hath shed
Claret and cream commingled;
And those her lips do now appear
As beams of coral, but more clear.

7

TO SILVIA TO WED

LET us, though late, at last, my Silvia, wed,
And loving lie in one devoted bed.

4

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Thy watch may stand, my minutes fly post-
haste;
No sound calls back the year that once is
past.
Then, sweetest Silvia, let 's no longer stay;
True love, we know, precipitates delay.
Away with doubts, all scruples hence
remove;
No man at one time can be wise and love.

8

THE PARLIAMENT OF ROSES TO JULIA

I DREAMT the roses one time went
To meet and sit in parliament;
The place for these, and for the rest
Of flowers, was thy spotless breast,
Over the which a state was drawn
Of tiffany or cobweb lawn.
Then in that parley all those powers
Voted the rose the queen of flowers;
But so as that herself should be
The maid of honor unto thee.

9

NO BASHFULNESS IN BEGGING

To get thine ends, lay bashfulness aside;
Who fears to ask doth teach to be denied.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

10

UPON ELECTRA

WHEN out of bed my love doth spring,
’T is but as day a-kindling:
But when she ’s up and fully dressed,
’T is then broad day throughout the east.

11

TO PERILLA

AE, my Perilla! dost thou grieve to see
Me, day by day, to steal away from thee?
Age calls me hence, and my gray hairs
 bid come,
And haste away to mine eternal home;
’T will not be long, Perilla, after this,
That I must give thee the supremest kiss:
Dead when I am, first cast in salt, and bring
Part of the cream from that religious
 spring;
With which, Perilla, wash my hands and
 feet;
That done, then wind me in that very sheet
Which wrapped thy smooth limbs when
 thou didst implore
The gods’ protection but the night before.
Follow me weeping to my turf, and there
Let fall a primrose, and with it a tear.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Then, lastly, let some weekly strewings be
Devoted to the memory of me.
Then shall my ghost not walk about, but
 keep
Still in the cool and silent shades of sleep.

12

A SONG TO THE MASKERS

COME down and dance ye in the toil
 Of pleasures to a heat;
But if to moisture, let the oil
 Of roses be your sweat.

Not only to yourselves assume
 These sweets, but let them fly
From this to that, and so perfume
 E'en all the standers-by;

As goddess Isis, when she went
 Or glided through the street,
Made all that touched her, with her scent,
 And whom she touched, turn sweet.

13

TO PERENNA

WHEN I thy parts run o'er, I can't espy
In any one the least indecency;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

But every line and limb diffused thence
A fair and unfamiliar excellence:
So that the more I look the more I prove
There 's still more cause why I the more
should love.

14

THE WOUNDED HEART

COME, bring your sampler, and with art
Draw in 't a wounded heart,
And dropping here and there:
Not that I think that any dart
Can make yours bleed a tear,
Or pierce it anywhere;
Yet do it to this end: that I
May by
This secret see,
Though you can make
That heart to bleed, yours ne'er will ache
For me.

15

TO ANTHERA

IF, dear Anthea, my hard fate it be
To live some few sad hours after thee,
Thy sacred corse with odors I will burn,
And with my laurel crown thy golden urn.

8

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Then holding up there such religious
things
As were, time past, thy holy filletings,
Near to thy reverend pitcher I will fall
Down dead for grief, and end my woes
withal:
So three in one small plot of ground shall
lie—
Anthea, Herrick, and his poetry.

16

THE WEEPING CHERRY

I SAW a cherry weep, and why?
Why wept it? but for shame
Because my Julia's lip was by,
And did outred the same.
But, pretty fondling, let not fall
A tear at all for that:
Which rubies, corals, scarlets, all
For tincture wonder at.

17

SOFT MUSIC

THE mellow touch of music most doth
wound
The soul when it doth rather sigh than
sound.

9

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

18

TO HIS MISTRESS OBJECTING TO HIM NEITHER
TOYING OR TALKING

YOU say I love not, 'cause I do not play
Still with your curls, and kiss the time away.
You blame me, too, because I can't devise
Some sport to please those babies in your
eyes:

By love's religion, I must here confess it,
The most I love when I the least express it.
Small griefs find tongues; full casks are
ever found

To give (if any, yet) but little sound.
Deep waters noiseless are; and this we know,
That chiding streams betray small depth
below.

So, when love speechless is, she doth
express

A depth in love and that depth bottomless.
Now, since my love is tongueless, know me
such

Who speak but little 'cause I love so much.

19

LOVE, WHAT IT IS

LOVE is a circle that doth restless move
In the same sweet eternity of love.

10

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

20

UPON THE LOSS OF HIS MISTRESSES

I HAVE lost, and lately, these
Many dainty mistresses:
Stately Julia, prime of all;
Sappho next, a principal;
Smooth Anthea for a skin
White, and heaven-like crystalline;
Sweet Electra, and the choice
Myrrha for the lute and voice;
Next Corinna, for her wit,
And the graceful use of it,
With Perilla—all are gone.
Only Herrick 's left alone
For to number sorrow by
Their departures hence, and die.

21

THE PARCÆ, OR THREE DAINTY DESTINIES:

THE ARMILLET

THREE lovely sisters working were,
As they were closely set,
Of soft and dainty maidenhair
A curious armillet.
I, smiling, asked them what they did,
Fair destinies all three,
Who told me they had drawn a thread
Of life, and 't was for me.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

They show'd me then how fine 't was spun,
And I repli'd thereto—
"I care not now how soon 't is done,
Or cut, if cut by you."

22

SORROWS SUCCEED

WHEN one is past, another care we have:
Thus woe succeeds a woe, as wave a wave.

23

TO ROBIN-REDBREAST

LAI^D out for dead, let thy last kindness be
With leaves and moss-work for to cover me;
And while the wood-nymphs my cold corse
inter,
Sing thou my dirge, sweet-warbling
chorister!
For epitaph, in foliage, next write this:
Here, here the tomb of Robin Herrick is.

24

DISCONTENTS IN DEVON

MORE discontents I never had
Since I was born than here,
Where I have been and still am sad,
In this dull Devonshire.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Yet, justly too, I must confess
I ne'er invented such
Ennobled numbers for the press,
Than where I loathed so much.

25

HER BED

SEEST thou that cloud as silver clear,
Plump, soft, and swelling everywhere?
'T is Julia's bed, and she sleeps there.

26

CHERRY RIPE

CHERRY ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones; come and buy.
If so be you ask me where
They do grow, I answer: There,
Where my Julia's lips do smile;
There 's the land, or cherry isle,
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow.

27

TO HIS MISTRESSES

PUT on your silks, and piece by piece
Give them the scent of ambergris;

13

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And for your breaths, too, let them smell
Ambrosia-like, or nectarell;
While other gums their sweets perspire,
By your own jewels set on fire.

28

TO ANTHEA

Now is the time, when all the lights wax
dim;
And thou, Anthea, must withdraw from him
Who was thy servant. Dearest, bury me
Under that holy oak or Gospel tree,
Where, though thou seest not, thou mayst
think upon
Me, when thou yearly go'st procession;
Or, for mine honor, lay me in that tomb
In which thy sacred relics shall have room.
For my embalming, sweetest, there will be
No spices wanting when I 'm laid by thee.

29

AN EPITAPH UPON A CHILD

VIRGINS promis'd when I died
That they would each primrose-tide
Duly, morn and evening, come,
And with flowers dress my tomb.
Having promis'd, pay your debts,
Maids, and here strew violets.

14

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

30

UPON JULIA'S VOICE

So smooth, so sweet, so silvery is thy voice
As, could they hear, the damn'd would make
no noise,
But listen to thee, walking in thy chamber,
Melting melodious words to lutes of amber.

31

AGAIN

WHEN I thy singing next shall hear,
I 'll wish I might turn all to ear,
To drink in notes and numbers such
As blessed souls can't hear too much;
Then melted down, there let me lie
Entranc'd and lost confusedly,
And by thy music stricken mute,
Die and be turn'd into a lute.

32

ALL THINGS DECAY AND DIE

ALL things decay with time: the forest sees
The growth and downfall of her aged
trees;

15

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

That timber tall, which threescore lusters
stood

The proud dictator of the state-like wood,
I mean (the sovereign of all plants) the oak,
Droops, dies, and falls without the cleaver's
stroke.

33

THE SUCCESSION OF THE FOUR SWEET MONTHS

FIRST, April, she with mellow showers
Opens the way for early flowers;
Then after her comes smiling May,
In a more rich and sweet array;
Next enters June, and brings us more
Gems than those two that went before;
Then (lastly) July comes, and she
More wealth brings in than all those three.

34

UPON HIS SISTER-IN-LAW, MISTRESS ELIZABETH HERRICK

FIRST, for effusions due unto the dead,
My solemn vows have here accomplished:
Next, how I love thee, that my grief must
tell,
Wherein thou liv'st forever. Dear, fare-
well.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

35

TO THE MOST COMELY AND PROPER
MISTRESS ELIZABETH FINCH

HANDSOME you are, and proper you will be
Despite of all your infortunity.
Live long and lovely, but yet grow no less
In that your own prefixed comeliness.
Spend on that stock; and when your life
must fall,
Leave others beauty to set up withal.

36

UPON ROSES

UNDER a lawn, than skies more clear,
Some ruffled roses nestling were;
And, snugging there, they seem'd to lie
As in a flowery nunnery.
They blush'd, and look'd more fresh than
flowers
Quicken'd of late by pearly showers,
And all because they were possess'd
But of the heat of Julia's breast,
Which, as a warm and moisten'd spring,
Gave them their ever-flourishing.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

37

THE CHEAT OF CUPID, OR THE UNGENTLE
GUEST

ONE silent night of late,
When every creature rested,
Came one unto my gate
And, knocking, me molested.

Who 's that, said I, beats there,
And troubles thus the sleepy?
Cast off, said he, all fear,
And let not locks thus keep ye.

For I a boy am, who
By moonless nights have swerved;
And all with showers wet through,
And e'en with cold half starved.

I pitiful arose,
And soon a taper lighted;
And did myself disclose
Unto the lad benighted.

I saw he had a bow
And wings, too, which did shiver;
And, looking down below,
I spied he had a quiver.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

I to my chimney's shine
Brought him, as love professes,
And chafed his hands with mine,
And dried his drooping tresses.

But when he felt him warmed:
Let 's try this bow of ours,
And string, if they be harmed,
Said he, with these late showers.

Forthwith his bow he bent,
And wedded string and arrow,
And struck me, that it went
Quite through my heart and marrow.

Then, laughing loud, he flew
Away, and thus said, flying:
Adieu, mine host, adieu,
I 'll leave thy heart a-dying.

38

DREAMS

HERE we are all by day; by night we 're
hurl'd
By dreams, each one into a several world.

19

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

39

WHY FLOWERS CHANGE COLOR

THESE fresh beauties, we can prove,
Once were virgins sick of love,
Turn'd to flowers. Still in some
Colors go, and colors come.

40

HIS REQUEST TO JULIA

JULIA, if I chance to die
Ere I print my poetry,
I most humbly thee desire
To commit it to the fire:
Better 't were my book were dead
Than to live not perfected.

41

DELIGHT IN DISORDER

A SWEET disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness:
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction,
An erring lace which here and there
Enthrals the crimson stomacher;
A cuff neglectful, and thereby
Ribbons to flow confusedly,

20

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat,
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility,
Do more bewitch me than when art
Is too precise in every part.

42

TO HIS MUSE

WERE I to give the baptism, I would choose
To christen thee, the bride, the bashful
muse,
Or muse of roses; since that name does fit
Best with those virgin verses thou hast
writ,
Which are so clean, so chaste, as none may
fear
Cato the censor, should he scan each here.

43

TO DEAN BOURN, A RUDE RIVER IN DEVON, BY WHICH SOMETIMES HE LIVED

DEAN BOURN, farewell; I never look to see
Dean, or thy watery incivility.
Thy rocky bottom, that doth tear thy
streams
And makes them frantic even to all ex-
tremes,

21

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

To my content I never should behold,
Were thy streams silver, or thy rocks all
gold.

Rocky thou art, and rocky we discover
Thy men, and rocky are thy ways all over.
O men, O manners, now and ever known
To be a rocky generation!

A people currish, churlish as the seas,
And rude almost as rudest savages,
With whom I did, and may re-sojourn when
Rocks turn to rivers, rivers turn to men.

44

TO JULIA

How rich and pleasing thou, my Julia, art
In each thy dainty and peculiar part!
First, for thy queenship, on thy head is set
Of flowers a sweet commingled coronet.
About thy neck a carcanet is bound,
Made of the ruby, pearl, and diamond.
A golden ring that shines upon thy thumb;
About thy wrist, the rich dardanium.
Between thy breasts (than down of swans
more white)

There plays the sapphire with the chryso-
lite.

No part besides must of thyself be known,
But by the topaz, opal, calcedon.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

45

TO LAURELS

A FUNERAL stone,
Or verse I covet none,
But only crave
Of you that I may have
A sacred laurel springing from my grave,
Which being seen,
Blest with perpetual green,
May grow to be
Not so much call'd a tree
As the eternal monument of me.

46

AMBITION

IN man ambition is the commonest thing:
Each one by nature loves to be a king.

47

THE BAG OF THE BEE

ABOUT the sweet bag of a bee
Two cupids fell at odds,
And whose the pretty prize should be
They vow'd to ask the gods.

23

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Which Venus hearing, thither came,
And for their boldness stripp'd them,
And, taking thence from each his flame,
With rods of myrtle whipp'd them.

Which done, to still their wanton cries,
When quiet grown she 'd seen them,
She kiss'd, and wip'd their dove-like eyes,
And gave the bag between them.

48

LOVE KILLED BY LACK

LET me be warm, let me be fully fed,
Luxurious love by wealth is nourished.
Let me be lean, and cold, and once grown
poor,
I shall dislike what once I lov'd before.

49

BEING ONCE BLIND, HIS REQUEST TO BIANCHA

WHEN age or chance has made me blind,
So that the path I cannot find,
And when my falls and stumblings are
More than the stones i' th' street by far,
Go thou afore, and I shall well
Follow thy perfumes by the smell;

24

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Or be my guide, and I shall be
Led by some light that flows from thee.
Thus held or led by thee, I shall
In ways confus'd nor slip or fall.

50

THE HOUR-GLASS

THAT hour-glass which there you see
With water fill'd, sirs, credit me,
The humor was, as I have read,
But lovers' tears incrystaled.
Which, as they drop by drop do pass
From th' upper to the under glass,
Do in a trickling manner tell,
By many a watery syllable,
That lovers' tears in lifetime shed
Do restless run when they are dead.

51

A COUNTRY LIFE: TO HIS BROTHER, MR. THOMAS HERRICK

THrice, and above, blest, my soul's half,
art thou
In thy both last and better vow:
Couldst leave the city, for exchange, to see
The country's sweet simplicity;

25

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And it to know and practise, with intent
To grow the sooner innocent
By studying to know virtue, and to aim
More at her nature than her name.
The last is but the least: the first doth tell
Ways less to live than to live well;
And both are known to thee, who now
canst live
Led by the conscience; to give
Justice to soon-pleased nature, and to show
Wisdom and she together go
And keep one center: this with that con-
spires
To teach man to confine desires
And know that riches have their proper
stint
In the contented mind, not mint;
And canst instruct that those who have
the itch
Of craving more are never rich.
These things thou know'st to th' height,
and dost prevent
That plague; because thou art content
With that Heaven gave thee with a wary
hand,
More blessed in thy brass than land,
To keep cheap nature even and upright;
To cool, not cocker appetite.
Thus thou canst tearcely live to satisfy
The belly chiefly, not the eye;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Keeping the barking stomach wisely quiet,
Less with a neat than needful diet.
But that which most makes sweet thy
country life
Is the fruition of a wife,
Whom, stars consenting with thy fate,
thou hast
Got not so beautiful as chaste;
By whose warm side thou dost securely
sleep,
While love the sentinel doth keep,
With those deeds done by day, which ne'er
affright
Thy silken slumbers in the night.
Nor has the darkness power to usher in
Fear to those sheets that know no sin.
The damask'd meadows and the pebbly
streams
Sweeten and make soft your dreams;
The purling springs, groves, birds, and
well-weav'd bowers,
With fields enameled with flowers,
Present their shapes; while fantasy dis-
closes
Millions of lilies mix'd with roses.
Then dream ye hear the lamb by many a
bleat
Woo'd to come suck the milky teat;
While Faunus in the vision comes to keep
From ravening wolves the fleecy sheep;

POEM OF ROBERT HERRICK

With such and such enchanting dreams,
 In sleep
 Thy sleep not so sound as sweet.
 The figures so thy rest endear
 To rise when Chanticleer
 Sings his first watch; but with the dawn
 Thy soul
 But first to sacrifice;
 Thy peace with Heaven, for some
 With holy meal and spurting salt.
Which done, thy painful thumb this sen-
 tence tells us
 Jove for our labor all things sells us.
Nor are thy daily and devout affairs
 Attended with those desperate cares
Th' industrious merchant has; who, for to
 find
 Gold, runneth to the Western Inde,
And back again, tortured with fears, doth
 fly,
 Untaught to suffer poverty.
But thou at home, blest with securest
 ease,
 Sitt'st, and believ'st that there be seas
And watery dangers; while thy whiter hap
 But sees these things within thy map.
And viewing them with a more safe sur-
 vey
 Mak'st easy fear unto thee say—

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

“A heart thrice wall’d with oak and brass
that man

Had, first durst plow the ocean.”

But thou at home, without or tide or gale,

Canst in thy map securely sail,

Seeing those painted countries, and so guess

By those fine shades their substances;

And, from thy compass taking small advice,

Buy’st travel at the lowest price.

Nor are thine ears so deaf but thou canst
hear,

Far more with wonder than with fear,

Fame tell of states, of countries, courts, and
kings,

And believe there be such things;

When of these truths thy happier knowledge
lies

More in thine ears than in thine eyes.

And when thou hear’st by that too true
report

Vice rules the most or all at court,

Thy pious wishes are, though thou not
there,

Virtue had, and mov’d her sphere.

But thou liv’st fearless, and thy face ne’er
shows

Fortune when she comes or goes,

But with thy equal thoughts prepared dost
stand,

To take her by the either hand;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Nor car'st which comes the first, the foul
or fair.

A wise man every way lies square,
And, like a surly oak with storms perplex'd,
Grows still the stronger, strongly vex'd.
Be so, bold spirit; stand center-like,
unmov'd;

And be not only thought, but prov'd
To be what I report thee; and inure
Thyself, if want comes to endure.
And so thou dost, for thy desires are
Confin'd to live with private Lar;
Not curious whether appetite be fed
Or with the first or second bread,
Who keep'st no proud mouth for delicious
cates.

Hunger makes coarse meats delicates.
Canst, and unurg'd, forsake that larded
fare,

Which art, not nature, makes so rare,
To taste boil'd nettles, colworts, beets, and
eat

These and sour herbs as dainty meat,
While soft opinion makes thy genius say,
Content makes all ambrosia.
Nor is it that thou keep'st this stricter size
So much for want of exercise;
To numb the sense of dearth, which should
sin haste it,
Thou might'st but only see 't, not taste it.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Yet can thy humble roof maintain a choir
Of singing crickets by the fire;
And the brisk mouse may feast herself
with crumbs

Till that the green-eyed kitten comes,
Then to her cabin blest she can escape
The sudden danger of a rape:
And thus thy little well-kept stock doth
prove

Wealth cannot make a life, but love.
Nor art thou so close-handed but canst
spend,
Counsel concurring with the end,
As well as spare, still conning o'er this
theme,

To shun the first and last extreme.
Ordaining that thy small stock find no
breach,

Or to exceed thy tether's reach;
But to live round, and close, and wisely
true

To thine own self, and known to few.
Thus let thy rural sanctuary be
Elysium to thy wife and thee,
There to disport yourselves with golden
measure;

For seldom use commends the pleasure.
Live, and live blest, thrice happy pair; let
breath,

But lost to one, be the other's death.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And as there is one love, one faith, one
troth,
Be so one death, one grave to both.
Till when, in such assurance live ye may,
Nor fear or wish your dying day.

52

DIVINATION BY A DAFFODIL

WHEN a daffodil I see,
Hanging down his head toward me,
Guess I may what I must be:
First, I shall decline my head;
Secondly, I shall be dead;
Lastly, safely buried.

53

UPON MRS. ELIZABETH WHEELER, UNDER THE
NAME OF AMARILLIS

SWEET Amarillis by a spring's
Soft and soul-melting murmurings
Slept, and thus sleeping, thither flew
A robin-redbreast, who, at view,
Not seeing her at all to stir,
Brought leaves and moss to cover her;
But while he perking there did pry
About the arch of either eye,

32

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

The lid began to let out day,
At which poor robin flew away,
And seeing her not dead, but all disleav'd,
He chirp'd for joy to see himself deceiv'd.

54

ADVERSITY

ADVERSITY hurts none, but only such
Whom whitest Fortune dandled has too
much.

55

THE EYE

MAKE me a heaven, and make me there
Many a less and greater sphere;
Make me the straight and oblique lines,
The motions, lations, and the signs;
Make me a chariot and a sun,
And let them through a zodiac run;
Next place me zones and tropics there,
With all the seasons of the year;
Make me a sunset and a night,
And then present the morning's light
Cloth'd in her camlets of delight;
To these make clouds to pour down rain,
With weather foul, then fair again;

;

33

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And when, wise artist, that thou hast
With all that can be this heaven grac'd,
Ah! what is then this curious sky
But only my Corinna's eye?

56

LOVE ME LITTLE, LOVE ME LONG

YOU say, to me-ward your affection 's
strong;
Pray love me little, so you love me long.
Slowly goes far: the mean is best: desire,
Grown violent, does either die or tire.

57

UPON THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN'S
IMPRISONMENT

NEVER was day so over-sick with showers
But that it had some intermitting hours;
Never was night so tedious but it knew
The last watch out, and saw the dawning
too;
Never was dungeon so obscurely deep
Wherein or light or day did never peep;
Never did moon so ebb, or seas so wane,
But they left hope-seed to fill up again.

34

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

So you, my lord, though you have now your
 stay,
Your night, your prison, and your ebb, you
 may
Spring up afresh; when all these mists are
 spent,
And starlike, once more gild our firma-
 ment.
Let but that mighty Cæsar speak, and then
All bolts, all bars, all gates shall cleave; as
 when
That earthquake shook the house, and gave
 the stout
Apostles way, unshackled, to go out.
This, as I wish for, so I hope to see;
Though you, my lord, have been unkind to
 me:
To wound my heart, and never to apply,
When you had power, the meanest
 remedy.
Well, though my grief by you was gall'd
 the more,
Yet I bring balm and oil to heal your sore.

58

TEARS ARE TONGUES

WHEN Julia chid I stood as mute the while
As is the fish or tongueless crocodile.

35

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Air coin'd to words my Julia could not hear,
But she could see each eye to stamp a tear;
By which mine angry mistress might
descry

Tears are the noble language of the eye.
And when true love of words is destitute
The eyes by tears speak, while the tongue
is mute.

59

THE CRUEL MAID

AND, cruel maid, because I see
You scornful of my love, and me,
I 'll trouble you no more, but go
My way, where you shall never know
What is become of me; there I
Will find me out a path to die,
Or learn some way how to forget
You and your name forever—yet
Ere I go hence, know this from me,
What will in time your fortune be;
This to your coyness I will tell;
And having spoke it once, farewell.
The lily will not long endure,
Nor the snow continue pure;
The rose, the violet, one day
See both these lady-flowers decay;
And you must fade as well as they.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And it may chance that love may turn,
And, like to mine, make your heart burn
And weep to see 't; yet this thing do,
That my last vow commends to you:
When you shall see that I am dead,
For pity let a tear be shed;
And, with your mantle o'er me cast,
Give my cold lips a kiss at last;
If twice you kiss, you need not fear
That I shall stir or live more here.
Next hollow out a tomb to cover
Me, me, the most despised lover;
And write thereon, *This, reader, know:*
Love kill'd this man. No more, but so.

60

TO DIANE

SWEET, be not proud of those two eyes
Which, starlike, sparkle in their skies;
Nor be you proud that you can see
All hearts your captives, yours yet free;
Be you not proud of that rich hair
Which wantons with the love-sick air;
Whenas that ruby which you wear,
Sunk from the tip of your soft ear,
Will last to be a precious stone
When all your world of beauty 's gone.

37

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

61

TO HIS DYING BROTHER,
MASTER WILLIAM HERRICK

LIFE of my life, take not so soon thy flight,
But stay the time till we have bade good
night.

Thou hast both wind and tide with thee;
thy way

As soon despatch'd is by the night as day.
Let us not then so rudely henceforth go
Till we have wept, kissed, sigh'd, shook
hands, or so.

There's pain in parting, and a kind of hell,
When once true lovers take their last
farewell.

What! shall we two our endless leaves
take here

Without a sad look or a solemn tear?
He knows not love that hath not this
truth prov'd,

Love is most loath to leave the thing
belov'd.

Pay we our vows and go; yet when we
part,

Then, even then, I will bequeath my heart
Into thy loving hands; for I'll keep none
To warm my breast when thou, my pulse,
art gone.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

No, here I 'll last, and walk (a harmless
shade)
About this urn wherein thy dust is laid,
To guard it so as nothing here shall be
Heavy to hurt those sacred seeds of thee.

62

TO A GENTLEWOMAN OBJECTING TO HIM HIS GRAY HAIRS

AM I despis'd because you say,
And I dare swear, that I am gray?
Know, lady, you have but your day,
And time will come when you shall
wear
Such frost and snow upon your hair;
And when (though long, it comes to
pass)
You question with your looking-glass;
And in that sincere crystal seek,
But find no rosebud in your cheek,
Nor any bed to give the show
Where such a rare carnation grew.
Ah! then too late, close in your chamber
keeping,
It will be told
That you are old,
By those true tears you 're weeping.

39

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

63

ON A PERFUMED LADY

YOU say you 're sweet; how should we
know
Whether that you be sweet or no?
From powders and perfumes keep free,
Then we shall smell how sweet you be.

64

UPON CUPID

LOVE like a gipsy lately came
And did me much importune
To see my hand, that by the same
He might foretell my fortune.

He saw my palm, and then, said he,
I tell thee by this score here
That thou within few months shalt be
The youthful Prince d'Amour here.

I smil'd, and bade him once more prove,
And by some cross-line show it,
That I could ne'er be prince of love,
Though here the princely poet.

40

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

65

UPON JULIA'S RIBAND

AS shows the air when with a rainbow
grac'd,
So smiles that riband 'bout my Julia's
waist;
Or like—nay, 't is that zonulet of love,
Wherein all pleasures of the world are
wove.

66

UPON A BLACK TWIST ROUNDING THE ARM
OF THE COUNTESS OF CARLISLE

I SAW about her spotless wrist,
Of blackest silk a curious twist;
Which, circumvolving gently, there
Enthrall'd her arm as prisoner.
Dark was the jail, but as if light
Had met t' engender with the night;
Or so as darkness made a stay
To show at once both night and day.
One fancy more! but if there be
Such freedom in captivity,
I beg to love that ever I
May in like chains of darkness lie.

41

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

67

HIS PROTESTATION TO PERILLA

NOONDAY and midnight shall at once be
seen;
Trees, at one time, shall be both sere and
green;
Fire and water shall together lie
In one self-sweet-conspiring sympathy;
Summer and winter shall at one time show
Ripe ears of corn, and up to th' ears in
snow;
Seas shall be sandless; fields devoid of
grass;
Shapeless the world, as when all chaos was—
Before, my dear Perilla, I will be
False to my vow, or fall away from thee.

68

TO MUSIC

BEGIN to charm, and, as thou strok'st mine
ears
With thy enchantment, melt me into tears.
Then let thy active hand scud o'er thy lyre,
And make my spirits frantic with the fire.
That done, sink down into a silvery strain,
And make me smooth as balm and oil
again.

42

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

69

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

GET up, get up for shame; the blooming
morn

Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.

See how Aurora throws her fair

Fresh-quilted colors through the air.

Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see

The dew bespangling herb and tree.

Each flower has wept and bow'd toward
the east

Above an hour since: yet you not dress'd;

Nay! not so much as out of bed?

When all the birds have matins said

And sung their thankful hymns, 't is
sin,

Nay, profanation to keep in,

Whereas a thousand virgins on this day

Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in
May.

Rise and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the springtime, fresh
and green,

And sweet as Flora. Take no care

For jewels for your gown or hair.

Fear not; the leaves will strew

Gems in abundance upon you.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some Orient pearls
 unwept;
Come and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night,
And Titan on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief
 in praying:
Few beads are best when once we go
 a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming,
 mark
How each field turns a street, each street a
 park
Made green and trimm'd with trees. See
 how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch. Each porch, each door ere this
An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove,
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street
And open fields and we not see 't?
Come, we 'll abroad; and let 's obey
The proclamation made for May,
And sin no more, as we have done, by
 staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let 's go a-Maying.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

There 's not a budding boy or girl this
day

But is got up and gone to bring in May.

A deal of youth, ere this, is come

Back and with white-thorn laden home.

Some have despatch'd their cakes and
cream

Before that we have left to dream;

And some have wept, and woo'd, and

plighted troth,

And chose their priest, ere we can cast off
sloth.

Many a green-gown has been given,

Many a kiss, both odd and even;

Many a glance, too, has been sent

From out the eye, love's firmament;

Many a jest told of the keys betraying

This night, and locks pick'd, yet we 're not
a-Maying.

Come, let us go while we are in our prime,
And take the harmless folly of the time.

We shall grow old apace, and die

Before we know our liberty.

Our life is short, and our days run

As fast away as does the sun;

And as a vapor or a drop of rain,

Once lost, can ne'er be found again,

So when or you or I are made

A fable, song, or fleeting shade,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drown'd with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but
decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let 's go a-Maying.

70

UPON HER VOICE

LET but thy voice engender with the string,
And angels will be born while thou dost
sing.

71

THE CAPTIV'D BEE, OR THE LITTLE FILCHER

AS Julia once a-slumbering lay
It chanced a bee did fly that way,
After a dew or dew-like shower,
To tipple freely in a flower.
For some rich flower he took the lip
Of Julia, and began to sip;
But when he felt he sucked from thence
Honey and in the quintessence,
He drank so much he scarce could stir,
So Julia took the pilferer.
And thus surpris'd, as filchers use,
He thus began himself t' excuse:

46

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

"Sweet lady flower, I never brought
Hither the least one thieving thought;
But, taking those rare lips of yours
For some fresh, fragrant, luscious flowers,
I thought I might there take a taste,
Where so much syrup ran at waste.
Besides, know this: I never sting
The flower that gives me nourishing,
But with a kiss, or thanks, do pay
For honey that I bear away."
This said, he laid his little scrip
Of honey 'fore her ladyship,
And told her, as some tears did fall,
That that he took, and that was all.
At which she smiled, and bade him go
And take his bag, but thus much know:
When next he came a-pilfering so,
He should from her full lips derive
Honey enough to fill his hive.

72

ON HIMSELF

LOST to the world; lost to myself; alone
Here now I rest under this marble stone,
In depth of silence, heard and seen of
none.

47

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

73

THE LILY IN A CRYSTAL

YOU have beheld a smiling rose
When virgins' hands have drawn
O'er it a cobweb-lawn;
And here you see this lily shows,
Tomb'd in a crystal stone,
More fair in this transparent case
Than when it grew alone
And had but single grace.

You see how cream but naked is
Nor dances in the eye
Without a strawberry,
Or some fine tincture like to this,
Which draws the sight thereto,
More by that wantoning with it
Than when the paler hue
No mixture did admit.

You see how amber through the streams
More gently strokes the sight
With some conceal'd delight,
Than when he darts his radiant beams
Into the boundless air;
Where either too much light his worth
Doth all at once impair,
Or set it little forth.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Put purple grapes or cherries in-
To glass, and they will send
More beauty to commend
Them from that clean and subtle skin
Than if they naked stood,
And had no other pride at all
But their own flesh and blood
And tinctures natural.

Thus lily, rose, grape, cherry, cream,
And strawberry do stir
More love when they transfer
A weak, a soft, a broken beam,
Than if they should discover
At full their proper excellence,
Without some scene cast over
To juggle with the sense.

Thus let this crystal'd lily be
A rule how far to teach
Your nakedness must reach;
And that no further than we see
Those glaring colors laid
By art's wise hand, but to this end
They should obey a shade,
Lest they too far extend.

So though you 're white as swan or snow,
And have the power to move
A world of men to love,
Yet when your lawns and silks shall flow,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And that white cloud divide
Into a doubtful twilight, then,
Then will your hidden pride
Raise greater fires in men.

74

IMPOSSIBILITIES TO HIS FRIEND

MY faithful friend, if you can see
The fruit to grow up, or the tree;
If you can see the color come
Into the blushing pear or plum;
If you can see the water grow
To cakes of ice or flakes of snow;
If you can see that drop of rain
Lost in the wild sea once again;
If you can see how dreams do creep
Into the brain by easy sleep,
Then there is hope that you may see
Her love me once who now hates me.

75

TO LIVE MERRILY AND TO TRUST TO GOOD
VERSES

NOW is the time for mirth,
Nor cheek or tongue be dumb;
For, with the flowery earth,
The golden pomp is come.

50

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

The golden pomp is come;
For now each tree does wear,
Made of her pap and gum,
Rich beads of amber here.

Now reigns the rose, and now
Th' Arabian dew besmears
My uncontrolled brow
And my retorted hairs.

Homer, this health to thee,
In sack of such a kind
That it would make thee see
Though thou wert ne'er so blind.

Next, Vergil I 'll call forth
To pledge this second health
In wine whose each cup 's worth
An Indian commonwealth.

A goblet next I 'll drink
To Ovid, and suppose,
Made he the pledge, he 'd think
The world had all one nose.

Then this immensive cup
Of aromatic wine,
Catullus, I quaff up
To that terse muse of thine.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Wild I am now with heat:
O Bacchus, cool thy rays!
Or, frantic, I shall eat
Thy thyrses and bite the bays.

Round, round the roof does run,
And, being ravish'd thus,
Come, I will drink a tun
To my Propertius.

Now, to Tibullus, next,
This flood I drink to thee:
But stay, I see a text
That this presents to me.

Behold, Tibullus lies
Here burnt, whose small return
Of ashes scarce suffice
To fill a little urn.

Trust to good verses, then;
They only will aspire
When pyramids, as men,
Are lost i' th' funeral fire.

And when all bodies meet
In Lethe to be drown'd,
Then only numbers sweet
With endless life are crown'd.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

76

TO VIOLETS

WELCOME, maids of honor;
You do bring
In the spring,
And wait upon her.

She has virgins many,
Fresh and fair;
Yet you are
More sweet than any.

You 're the maiden posies,
And so grac'd
To be plac'd
'Fore damask roses.

Yet, though thus respected,
By and by
Ye do lie,
Poor girls, neglected.

77

TO CARNATIONS : A SONG

STAY while ye will, or go
And leave no scent behind ye;
Yet, trust me, I shall know
The place where I may find ye.

53

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Within my Lucia's cheek,
Whose livery ye wear,
Play ye at hide or seek,
I 'm sure to find ye there.

78

TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

GATHER ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles
to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he 's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he 's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may go marry;
For having lost but once your prime
You may forever tarry.

54

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

79

TO HIS FRIEND, ON THE UNTUNABLE TIMES

PLAY I could once; but, gentle friend, you
see

My harp hung up here on the willow-tree.
Sing I could once, and bravely, too, inspire
With luscious numbers my melodious lyre.
Draw I could once, although not stocks or
stones,

Amphion-like, men made of flesh and bones,
Whither I would; but ah! I know not how,
I feel in me this transmutation now.

Grief, my dear friend, has first my harp
unstrung,

Wither'd my hand, and palsy-struck my
tongue.

80

HIS POETRY HIS PILLAR

ONLY a little more
I have to write;
Then I 'll give o'er,
And bid the world good night.

'T is but a flying minute
That I must stay,
Or linger in it;
And then I must away.

55

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

O Time that cut'st down all!
And scarce leav'st here
Memorial
Of any men that were.

How many lie forgot
In vaults beneath,
And piecemeal rot
Without a fame in death?

Behold this living stone
I rear for me,
Ne'er to be thrown
Down, envious Time, by thee.

Pillars let some set up,
If so they please:
Here is my hope
And my Pyramides.

81

THE CHRISTIAN MILITANT

A MAN prepar'd against all ills to come,
That dares to dead the fire of martyrdom;
That sleeps at home, and sailing there at
ease,
Fears not the fierce sedition of the seas;

56

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

That 's counter-proof against the farm's
 mishaps,
Undreadful, too, of courtly thunderclaps;
That wears one face, like heaven, and never
 shows
A change when Fortune either comes or
 goes;
That keeps his own strong guard, in the
 despite
Of what can hurt by day, or harm by night;
That takes and redelivers every stroke
Of chance, as made up all of rock, and
 oak;
That sighs at other's death, smiles at his
 own
Most dire and horrid crucifixion:
Who for true glory suffers thus, we grant
Him to be here our Christian militant.

82

A PASTORAL UPON THE BIRTH OF PRINCE
CHARLES: PRESENTED TO THE KING, AND
SET BY MR. NIC. LANIERE.

The Speakers, MIRTILLO, AMINTAS, and
AMARILLIS

AMIN. Good day, Mirtillo. MIRT. And to
 you no less,
And all fair signs lead on our shepherdess.

57

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

AMAR. With all white luck to you. MIRT.
But say, what news
Stirs in our sheep-walk? AMIN. None,
save that my ewes,
My wethers, lambs, and wanton kids are
well,
Smooth, fair, and fat! none better I can
tell;
Or that this day Menalchas keeps a feast
For his sheep-shearers. MIRT. True, these
are the least.
But, dear Amintas and sweet Amarillis,
Rest but a while here, by this bank of
lilies,
And lend a gentle ear to one report
The country has. AMIN. From whence?
AMAR. From whence? MIRT. The
court.
Three days before the shutting in of May
(With whitest wool be ever crown'd that
day!),
To all our joy, a sweet-fac'd child was born,
More tender than the childhood of the
morn.
CHOR. Pan pipe to him, and bleats of
lambs and sheep
Let lullaby the pretty prince asleep!
MIRT. And that his birth should be more
singular,
At noon of day was seen a silver star,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Bright as the wise men's torch which
guided them
To God's sweet babe, when born at
Bethlehem;
While golden angels (some have told to
me)
Sung out his birth with heavenly min-
strelsy.

AMIN. Oh, rare! But is 't a trespass if we
three

Should wend along his babyship to see?

MIRT. Not so, not so.

CHOR. But if it chance to prove
At most a fault, 't is but a fault of love.

AMAR. But, dear Mirtillo, I have heard it
told

Those learned men brought incense,
myrrh, and gold
From countries far, with store of spices
sweet,
And laid them down for offerings at his
feet.

MIRT. 'T is true, indeed; and each of us
will bring

Unto our smiling and our blooming king
A neat though not so great an offering.

AMAR. A garland for my gift shall be
Of flowers ne'er suck'd by th' thieving bee;
And all most sweet; yet all less sweet than
he.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

AMIN. And I will bear, along with you,
Leaves dropping down the honeyed dew,
With oaten pipes as sweet as new.

MIRT. And I a sheep-hook will bestow,
To have his little kingship know,
As he is prince, he 's shepherd, too.

CHOR. Come, let 's away, and quickly
let 's be dress'd,
And quickly give—the swiftest grace is
best.

And when before him we have laid our
treasures,
We 'll bless the babe, then back to country
pleasures.

83

TO THE LARK

GOOD speed, for I this day
Betimes my matins say:

Because I do
Begin to woo,
Sweet-singing lark,
Be thou the clerk,
And know thy when
To say, Amen.
And if I prove
Blest in my love,
Then thou shalt be
High priest to me,

60

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

At my return,
To incense burn;
And so to solemnize
Love's and my sacrifice.

84

LYRIC FOR LEGACIES

GOLD I 've none, for use or show,
Neither silver to bestow
At my death; but this much know:
That each lyric here shall be
Of my love a legacy,
Left to all posterity.
Gentle friends, then do but please
To accept such coins as these
As my last remembrances.

85

A MEDITATION FOR HIS MISTRESS

YOU are a tulip seen to-day,
But, dearest, of so short a stay
That where you grew scarce man can
say.

You are a lovely July flower,
Yet one rude wind or ruffling shower
Will force you hence, and in an hour.

61

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

You are a sparkling rose i' th' bud,
Yet lost ere that chaste flesh and blood
Can show where you or grew or stood.

You are a full-spread, fair-set vine,
And can with tendrils love entwine,
Yet dried ere you distil your wine.

You are like balm inclosed well
In amber, or some crystal shell,
Yet lost ere you transfuse your smell.

You are a dainty violet,
Yet wither'd ere you can be set
Within the virgin's coronet.

You are the queen all flowers among,
But die you must, fair maid, ere long,
As he, the maker of this song.

86

THE BLEEDING HAND, OR THE SPRIG OF EGLANTINE GIVEN TO A MAID

FROM this bleeding hand of mine
Take this sprig of eglantine,
Which, though sweet unto your smell,
Yet the fretful brier will tell,
He who plucks the sweets shall prove
Many thorns to be in love.

62

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

87

THE FAIRY TEMPLE, OR OBERON'S CHAPEL.
DEDICATED TO MR. JOHN MERRIFIELD,
COUNSELOR AT LAW

*Rare temples thou hast seen, I know,
And rich for in and outward show.
Survey this chapel, built alone,
Without or lime, or wood, or stone;
Then say if one thou 'st seen more fine
Than this, the fairies' once, now thine.*

THE TEMPLE

A WAY enchas'd with glass and beads
There is, that to the chapel leads,
Whose structure, for his holy rest,
Is here the halcyon's curious nest;
Into the which who looks shall see
His temple of idolatry,
Where he of godheads has such store
As Rome's pantheon had not more.
His house of Rimmon this he calls,
Girt with small bones instead of walls.
First, in a niche, more black than jet,
His idol cricket there is set;
Then in a polish'd oval by
There stands his idol beetle-fly;
Next in an arch, akin to this,
His idol canker seated is;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Then in a round is plac'd by these
His golden god, Cantharides.
So that, where'er ye look, ye see,
No capital, no cornice free,
Or frieze, from this fine frippery.
Now this the fairies would have known;
Theirs is a mixed religion,
And some have heard the elves it call
Part pagan, part papistical.
If unto me all tongues were granted,
I could not speak the saints here painted:
Saint Tit, Saint Nit, Saint Is, Saint Itis,
Who 'gainst Mab's state placed here right is;
Saint Will-o'-th'-wisp, of no great bigness,
But *alias* called here *Fatuus ignis*;
Saint Fripp, Saint Trip, Saint Fill, Saint
 Fillie,
Neither those other saintships will I
Here go about for to recite
Their number, almost infinite,
Which one by one here set down are
In this most curious calendar.
First, at the entrance of the gate
A little puppet priest doth wait,
Who squeaks to all the comers there:
"Favor your tongues who enter here;
Pure hands bring hither without stain."
A second pules: "Hence, hence, profane!"
Hard by, i' th' shell of half a nut
The holy water there is put:

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

A little brush of squirrel's hairs
(Composed of odd, not even pairs)
Stands in the platter or close by
To purge the fairy family.
Near to the altar stands the priest,
There offering up the holy grist,
Ducking in mood and perfect tense,
With (much-good-do-'t him) reverence.
The altar is not here four-square,
Nor in a form triangular,
Nor made of glass, or wood, or stone,
But of a little transverse bone,
Which boys and bruckel'd children call
(Playing for points and pins) cockal.
Whose linen drapery is a thin
Subtile and ductile codlin's skin,
Which o'er the board is smoothly spread
With little seal-work damasked.
The fringe that circumbinds it, too,
Is spangle-work of trembling dew,
Which, gently gleaming, makes a show
Like frost-work glittering on the snow.
Upon this fetuous board doth stand
Something for showbread, and at hand,
Just in the middle of the altar,
Upon an end, the fairy psalter,
Grac'd with the trout-flies' curious wings,
Which serve for watchet ribbonings.
Now, we must know, the elves are led
Right by the rubric which they read.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And, if report of them be true,
They have their text for what they do;
Aye, and their book of canons, too.
And, as Sir Thomas Parson tells,
They have their book of articles;
And, if that fairy knight not lies,
They have their book of homilies;
And other scriptures that design
A short but righteous discipline.
The basin stands the board upon
To take the free oblation,
A little pin-dust, which they hold
More precious than we prize our gold;
Which charity they give to many
Poor of the parish, if there 's any.
Upon the ends of these neat rails,
Hatch'd with the silver-light of snails,
The elves in formal manner fix
Two pure and holy candlesticks,
In either which a small tall bent
Burns for the altar's ornament.
For sanctity they have to these
Their curious copes and surplices
Of cleanest cobweb hanging by
In their religious vestery.
They have their ash-pans and their
brooms
To purge the chapel and the rooms;
Their many mumbling mass-priests here,
And many a dapper chorister.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Their ush'ring vergers here, likewise
Their canons and their chanteries.
Of cloister-monks they have enow,
Aye, and their abbey-lubbers, too;
And, if their legend do not lie,
They much affect the papacy;
And since the last is dead, there 's hope
Elf Boniface shall next be pope.
They have their cups and chalices;
Their pardons and indulgences;
Their beads of nits, bells, books, and wax
Candles, forsooth, and other knacks;
Their holy oil, their fasting spittle;
Their sacred salt here, not a little;
Dry chips, old shoes, rags, grease and bones;
Besides their fumigations
To drive the devil from the cod-piece
Of the friar (of work an odd piece).
Many a trifle, too, and trinket,
And for what use, scarce man would think it.
Next, then, upon the chanters' side
An apple's core is hung up dried,
With rattling kernels, which is rung
To call to morn- and even-song.
The saint to which the most he prays
And offers incense nights and days,
The lady of the lobster is,
Whose foot-pace he doth stroke and kiss;
And humbly chives of saffron brings
For his most cheerful offerings.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

When, after these, he 's paid his vows
He lowly to the altar bows;
And then he dons the silk-worm's shed,
Like a Turk's turban on his head,
And reverently departeth thence,
Hid in a cloud of frankincense,
And by the glow-worm's light well guided,
Goes to the feast that 's now provided.

88

OBERON'S FEAST

*Shapcot! to thee the fairy state
I, with discretion, dedicate,
Because thou prizest things that are
Curious and unfamiliar.
Take first the feast; these dishes gone,
We 'll see the fairy court anon.*

A LITTLE mushroom table spread,
After short prayers, they set on bread;
A moon-parch'd grain of purest wheat,
With some small glittering grit to eat
His choice bits with; then in a trice
They make a feast less great than nice.
But all this while his eye is serv'd,
We must not think his ear was sterv'd;
But that there was in place to stir
His spleen, the chirring grasshopper,

68

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

The merry cricket, puling fly,
The piping gnat for minstrelsy.
And now we must imagine, first,
The elves present, to quench his thirst,
A pure seed-pearl of infant dew
Brought and besweetened in a blue
And pregnant violet; which done,
His kitling eyes begin to run
Quite through the table, where he spies
The horns of papery butterflies:
Of which he eats, and tastes a little
Of that we call the cuckoo's spittle.
A little fuzz-ball pudding stands
By, yet not blessed by his hands,
That was too coarse; but then forthwith
He ventures boldly on the pith
Of sugar'd rush, and eats the sag
And well-bestrutted bee's sweet bag,
Gladdening his pallet with some store
Of emmets' eggs; what would he more?
But beards of mice, a newt's stewed thigh,
A bloated earwig and a fly;
With the red-capp'd worm that 's shut
Within the concave of a nut,
Brown as his tooth. A little moth
Late fatten'd in a piece of cloth;
With withered cherries, mandrakes' ears,
Moles' eyes; to these the slain stag's tears,
The unctuous dewlaps of a snail,
The broke heart of a nightingale

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

O'ercome in music; with a wine
Ne'er ravish'd from the flattering vine,
But gently press'd from the soft side
Of the most sweet and dainty bride,
Brought in a dainty daisy, which
He fully quaffs up to bewitch
His blood to height; this done, commended
Grace by his priest; the feast is ended.

89

THE FAIRIES

If ye will with Mab find grace,
Set each platter in his place;
Rake the fire up, and get
Water in, ere sun be set;
Wash your pails and cleanse your dairies—
Sluts are loathsome to the fairies;
Sweep your house; who doth not so,
Mab will pinch her by the toe.

90

THE BEGGAR TO MAB, THE FAIRY QUEEN

PLEASE your Grace, from out your store,
Give an alms to one that 's poor,
That your mickle may have more.
Black I 'm grown for want of meat;
Give me, then, an ant to eat,
Or the cleft ear of a mouse
Over-sour'd in drink of souse;

70

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Or, sweet lady, reach to me
The abdomen of a bee;
Or commend a cricket's hip,
Or his huckson, to my scrip.
Give for bread a little bit
Of a pea that 'gins to chit,
And my full thanks take for it.
Flour of fuzz-balls, that 's too good
For a man in needyhood;
But the meal of mill-dust can
Well content a craving man.
Any orts the elves refuse
Well will serve the beggar's use.
But if this may seem too much
For an alms, then give me such
Little bits that nestle there
In the prisoner's pannier.
So a blessing light upon
You and mighty Oberon:
That your plenty last till when
I return your alms again.

91

TO MISTRESS KATHARINE BRADSHAW, THE
LOVELY, THAT CROWNED HIM WITH
LAUREL

MY muse in meads has spent her many
hours
Sitting, and sorting several sorts of flowers,

71

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

To make for others garlands; and to set
On many a head here many a coronet.
But amongst all encircled here, not one
Gave her a day of coronation;
Till you, sweet mistress, came and interwove
A laurel for her, ever young as love.
You first of all crown'd her; she must, of due,
Render for that a crown of life to you.

92

THE PLAUDIT, OR END OF LIFE

If, after rude and boisterous seas,
My wearied pinnace here finds ease;
If so it be I've gained the shore
With safety of a faithful oar;
If, having run my bark on ground,
Ye see the aged vessel crown'd:
What's to be done, but on the sands
Ye dance and sing and now clap hands?
The first act's doubtful, but we say
It is the last commends the play.

93

TO MUSIC, TO BECALM HIS FEVER

CHARM me asleep and melt me so
With thy delicious numbers,
That, being ravish'd, hence I go
Away in easy slumbers.

72

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Ease my sick head
And make my bed,
Thou power that canst sever
From me this ill;
And quickly still,
Though thou not kill,
My fever.

Thou sweetly canst convert the same
From a consuming fire
Into a gentle-licking flame,
And make it thus expire.
Then make me weep
My pains asleep;
And give me such repose
That I, poor I,
May think thereby
I live and die
'Mongst roses.

Fall on me like a silent dew,
Or like those maiden showers
Which, by the peep of day, do strew
A baptism o'er the flowers.
Melt, melt my pains
With thy soft strains;
That, having ease me given,
With full delight
I leave this light,
And take my flight
For heaven.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

94

TO THE ROSE: A SONG

Go, happy rose, and interweave
With other flowers, bind my love.
Tell her, too, she must not be
Longer flowing, longer free,
That so oft has fetter'd me.

Say, if she 's fretful, I have bands
Of pearl and gold to bind her hands;
Tell her, if she struggle still,
I have myrtle rods (at will)
For to tame, though not to kill.

Take thou my blessing thus, and go
And tell her this, but do not so,
Lest a handsome anger fly
Like a lightning from her eye,
And burn thee up as well as I.

95

TO MUSIC, TO BECALM A SWEET-SICK YOUTH
CHARMS, that call down the moon from out
her sphere,
On this sick youth work your enchantments
here;

74

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Bind up his senses with your numbers so
As to entrance his pain, or cure his woe;
Fall gently, gently, and awhile him keep
Lost in the civil wilderness of sleep;
That done, then let him, dispossess'd of
 pain,
Like to a slumb'ring bride, awake again.

96

MRS. ELIZ. WHEELER, UNDER THE NAME OF
THE LOST SHEPHERDESS

AMONG the myrtles as I walk'd
Love and my sighs thus intertalk'd:
Tell me, said I, in deep distress,
Where I may find my Shepherdess?
—Thou fool, said Love, know'st thou not
 this?

In everything that 's sweet she is.
In yond carnation go and seek,
There thou shalt find her lip and cheek;
In that enamel'd pansy by,
There thou shalt have her curious eye;
In bloom of peach and rose's bud,
There waves the streamer of her blood.
—'T is true, said I; and thereupon
I went to pluck them one by one,
To make of parts an union;
But on a sudden all were gone.

75

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

At which I stopp'd. Said Love, These be
The true resemblances of thee;
For as these flowers, thy joys must die;
And in the turning of an eye;
And all thy hopes of her must wither,
Like those short sweets here knit together.

97

THE COMING OF GOOD LUCK

So good luck came, and on my roof did light,
Like noiseless snow, or as the dew of night:
Not all at once, but gently, as the trees
Are by the sunbeams tickled by degrees.

98

THE PRESENT, OR THE BAG OF THE BEE

FLY to my mistress, pretty pilfering bee,
And say thou bring'st this honey-bag from
me.
When on her lip thou hast thy sweet dew
placed,
Mark if her tongue but slyly steal a taste.
If so, we live; if not, with mournful hum
Toll forth my death; next, to my burial
come.

76

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

99

THE HOCK-CART OR HARVEST HOME. TO
THE RIGHT HONORABLE MILDMAI,
EARL OF WESTMORELAND

COME, sons of summer, by whose toil
We are the lords of wine and oil;
By whose tough labors and rough hands
We rip up first, then reap our lands.
Crown'd with the ears of corn, now come,
And to the pipe sing harvest home.
Come forth, my lord, and see the cart
Dress'd up with all the country art;
See here a malkin, there a sheet,
As spotless pure as it is sweet;
The horses, mares, and frisking fillies,
Clad all in linen white as lilies.
The harvest swains and wenches bound
For joy, to see the hock-cart crowned.
About the cart, hear how the rout
Of rural younglings raise the shout;
Pressing before, some coming after,
Those with a shout, and these with laughter.
Some bless the cart, some kiss the sheaves,
Some prank them up with oaken leaves;
Some cross the fill-horse, some with great
Devotion stroke the home-borne wheat;
While other rustics, less attent
To prayers than to merriment,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK.

Run after with their breeches rent.
Well, on, brave boys, to your lord's hearth,
Glitt'ring with fire, where, for your mirth,
Ye shall see first the large and chief
Foundation of your feast, fat beef;
With upper stories, mutton, veal,
And bacon (which makes full the meal),
With several dishes standing by,
As here a custard, there a pie,
And here all-tempting frumenty.
And for to make the merry cheer,
If smirking wine be wanting here,
There 's that which drowns all care, stout
beer;
Which freely drink to your lord's health,
Then to the plow, the commonwealth,
Next to your flails, your fans, your vats,
Then to the maids with wheaten hats;
To the rough sickle, and crooked scythe,
Drink, frolic, boys, till all be blithe.
Feed, and grow fat; and as ye eat
Be mindful that the laboring neat,
As you, may have their fill of meat.
And know, besides, ye must revoke
The patient ox unto the yoke,
And all go back unto the plow
And harrow, though they 're hanged up now.
And, you must know, your lord's word 's
true,
Feed him ye must, whose food fills you;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And that this pleasure is like rain,
Not sent ye for to drown your pain,
But for to make it spring again.

100

TO MUSIC: A SONG

MUSIC, thou queen of Heaven, care-charm-
ing spell,
That strik'st a stillness into Hell;
Thou that tam'st tigers, and fierce storms,
that rise,
With thy soul-melting lullabies;
Fall down, down, down, from those thy
chiming spheres
To charm our souls, as thou enchant'st
our ears.

101

TO PRIMROSES FILLED WITH MORNING DEW ✓

WHY do ye weep, sweet babes? Can tears
Speak grief in you,
Who were but born
Just as the modest morn
Teem'd her refreshing dew?
Alas! you have not known that shower
That mars a flower,
Nor felt th' unkind
Breath of a blasting wind,
Nor are ye worn with years,

79

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Or warp'd as we,
Who think it strange to see
Such pretty flowers, like to orphans young,
To speak by tears before ye have a tongue.

Speak, whimp'ring younglings, and make
known

The reason why
Ye droop and weep;
Is it for want of sleep?
Or childish lullaby?
Or that ye have not seen as yet

The violet?
Or brought a kiss
From that sweetheart to this?
No, no, this sorrow shown
By your tears shed
Would have this lecture read:
That things of greatest, so of meanest worth,
Conceiv'd with grief are, and with tears
brought forth.

102

TO ANTREA, WHO MAY COMMAND HIM
ANYTHING

BID me to live, and I will live
Thy protestant to be,
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee.

80

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
A heart as sound and free
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I 'll give to thee.

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay
To honor thy decree,
Or bid it languish quite away,
And 't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep
While I have eyes to see;
And, having none, yet I will keep
A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I 'll despair
Under that cypress-tree,
Or bid me die, and I will dare
E'en death to die for thee.

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
The very eyes of me,
And hast command of every part
To live and die for thee.

103

TO MEADOWS

YE have been fresh and green,
Ye have been fill'd with flowers,
And ye the walks have been
Where maids have spent their hours.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

You have beheld how they
With wicker arks did come
To kiss and bear away
The richer cowslips home.

You 've heard them sweetly sing,
And seen them in a round:
Each virgin like a spring,
With honeysuckles crown'd.

But now we see none here
Whose silvery feet did tread,
And with dishevel'd hair
Adorn'd this smoother mead.

Like unthrifths, having spent
Your stock and needy grown,
You 're left here to lament
Your poor estates, alone.

104

TO HIS HOUSEHOLD GODS

RISE, household gods, and let us go;
But whither I myself not know.
First, let us dwell on rudest seas;
Next, with severest savages;
Last, let us make our best abode
Where human foot as yet ne'er trod:
Search worlds of ice, and rather there
Dwell than in loathed Devonshire.

82

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

105

TO THE NIGHTINGALE AND ROBIN-REDBREAST

WHEN I departed am, ring thou my knell,
Thou pitiful and pretty Philomel;
And when I 'm laid out for a corse, then be
Thou sexton, redbreast, for to cover me.

106

TO THE WILLOW-TREE

THOU art to all lost love the best,
The only true plant found,
Wherewith young men and maids distrest
And left of love, are crown'd.

When once the lover's rose is dead
Or laid aside forlorn,
Then willow garlands, 'bout the head,
Bedew'd with tears, are worn.

When with neglect, the lover's bane,
Poor maids rewarded be,
For their love lost their only gain
Is but a wreath from thee.

And underneath thy cooling shade,
When weary of the light,
The love-spent youth and love-sick maid
Come to weep out the night.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

107

DEVOTION MAKES THE DEITY

WHO forms a godhead out of gold or stone
Makes not a god, but he that prays to one.

108

TO VIRGINS

HEAR, ye virgins, and I'll teach
What the times of old did preach.
Rosamond was in a bower
Kept, as Danaë in a tower,
But yet love, who subtle is,
Crept to that, and came to this.
Be ye lock'd up like to these,
Or the rich Hesperides,
Or those babies in your eyes,
In their crystal nunneries;
Notwithstanding love will win,
Or else force a passage in:
And as coy be as you can,
Gifts will get ye, or the man.

109

LOSS FROM THE LEAST

GREAT men by small means oft are over-
thrown:
He's lord of thy life who contemns his own.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

110

THE BELLMAN

FROM noise of scare-fires rest ye free,
From murders Benedicite.
From all mischances that may fright
Your pleasing slumbers in the night,
Mercy secure ye all, and keep
The goblin from ye while ye sleep.
Past one o'clock, and almost two,
My masters all, good day to you.

111

CASUALTIES

GOOD things that come of course, far less
do please
Than those which come by sweet contin-
gencies.

112

UPON A CHILD THAT DIED

HERE she lies, a pretty bud,
Lately made of flesh and blood,
Who as soon fell fast asleep
As her little eyes did peep.
Give her strewings, but not stir
The earth that lightly covers her.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

113

CONTENT, NOT CATES

'T IS not the food, but the content
That makes the table's merriment.
Where trouble serves the board, we eat
The platters there as soon as meat.
A little pipkin with a bit
Of mutton or of veal in it,
Set on my table, trouble-free,
More than a feast contenteth me.

114

TO DAFFODILS

✓
FAIR daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

115

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT SENT TO
SIR SIMON STEWARD

No news of navies burnt at seas;
No noise of late-spawn'd tittyrises;
No closet plot, or open vent,
That frights men with a parliament;
No new device or late-found trick
To read by the stars the kingdom's sick;
No gin to catch the state, or wring
The free-born nostrils of the king,
We send to you; but here a jolly
Verse, crown'd with ivy and with holly,
That tells of winter's tales and mirth,
That milkmaids make about the hearth,
Of Christmas sports, the wassail-bowl,
That tost up, after fox-i'-th'-hole;
Of blindman-buff, and of the care
That young men have to shoe the mare;
Of twelve-tide cakes, of peas and beans,
Wherewith you make those merry scenes,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Whenas ye choose your king and queen,
And cry out: *Hey, for our town green;*
Of ash-heaps, in the which ye use
Husbands and wives by streaks to choose;
Of crackling laurel, which fore-sounds
A plenteous harvest to your grounds:
Of these and such like things for shift,
We send instead of New Year's gift.
Read then, and when your faces shine
With buxom meat and cap'ring wine,
Remember us in cups full crown'd,
And let our city-health go round,
Quite through the young maids and the
men,
To the ninth number, if not ten;
Until the fired chestnuts leap
For joy to see the fruits ye reap
From the plump chalice and the cup,
That tempts till it be tossed up;
Then as ye sit about your embers,
Call not to mind those fled Decembers,
But think on these that are t' appear
As daughters to the instant year:
Sit crown'd with rosebuds, and carouse
Till Liber Pater twirls the house
About your ears; and lay upon
The year your cares that 's fled and gone.
And let the russet swains the plow
And harrow hang up resting now;
And to the bagpipe all address,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Till sleep takes place of weariness.
And thus, throughout, with Christmas plays
Frolic the full twelve holidays.

116

MATINS, OR MORNING PRAYER

WHEN with the virgin morning thou dost
rise,
Crossing thyself, come thus to sacrifice;
First wash thy heart in innocence, then
bring
Pure hands, pure habits, pure, pure every-
thing.
Next to the altar humbly kneel, and thence
Give up thy soul in clouds of frankincense.
Thy golden censers, fill'd with odors sweet,
Shall make thy actions with their ends to
meet.

117

THE BRACELET TO JULIA

WHY I tie about thy wrist,
Julia, this my silken twist?
For what other reason is 't,
But to show thee how in part
Thou my pretty captive art?
But thy bond-slave is my heart;

89

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

'T is but silk that bindeth thee,
Snap the thread and thou art free;
But 't is otherwise with me;
I am bound, and fast bound, so
That from thee I cannot go;
If I could, I would not so.

118

HIS AGE: DEDICATED TO HIS PECULIAR
FRIEND, MR. JOHN WICKES, UNDER THE NAME
OF POSTHUMUS

AH, Posthumus! our years hence fly
And leave no sound: nor piety,
Or prayers, or vow
Can keep the wrinkle from the brow.
But we must on,
As fate does lead or draw us; none,
None, Posthumus, could e'er decline
The doom of cruel Proserpine.

The pleasing wife, the house, the ground
Must all be left, no one plant found
To follow thee,
Save only the curst cypress-tree!
—A merry mind
Looks forward, scorns what 's left behind;
Let 's live, my Wickes, then, while we may,
And here enjoy our holiday.

90

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

We 've seen the past best times, and these
Will ne'er return; we see the seas,
 And moons to wane,
But they fill up their ebbs again;
 But vanish'd man,
Like to a lily lost, ne'er can,
Ne'er can repullulate, or bring
His days to see a second spring.

But on we must, and thither tend,
Where Ancus and rich Tullus blend
 Their sacred seed;
Thus has infernal Jove decreed;
 We must be made,
Ere long a song, ere long a shade.
Why, then, since life to us is short,
Let 's make it full up by our sport.

Crown we our heads with roses, then,
And 'noint with Tyrian balm; for when
 We two are dead,
The world with us is buried.
 Then live we free
As is the air, and let us be
Our own fair wind, and mark each one
Day with the white and lucky stone.

We are not poor, although we have
No roofs of cedar, nor our brave

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Baiae, nor keep
Account of such a flock of sheep;
Nor bullocks fed
To lard the shambles; barbels bred
To kiss our hands; nor do we wish
For Pollio's lampreys in our dish.

If we can meet, and so confer,
Both by a shining salt-cellar,
And have our roof,
Although not arch'd, yet weather-proof,
And ceiling free
From that cheap candle-baudery;
We 'll eat our bean with that full mirth
As we were lords of all the earth.

Well, then, on what seas we are tost,
Our comfort is, we can't be lost.
Let the winds drive
Our bark, yet she will keep alive *
Amidst the deeps:
'T is constancy, my Wickes, which keeps
The pinnacle up, which, though she errs
I' th' seas, she saves her passengers.

Say, we must part; sweet mercy bless
Us both i' th' sea, camp, wilderness!
Can we so far
Stray, to become less circular

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Than we are now?
No, no, that selfsame heart, that vow
Which made us one, shall ne'er undo,
Or ravel so, to make us two.

Live in thy peace; as for myself,
When I am bruised on the shelf
Of time, and show
My locks behung with frost and snow;
When with the rheum,
The cough, the phthisic, I consume
Unto an almost nothing; then,
The ages fled, I 'll call again,

And with a tear compare these last
Lame and bad times with those are past,
While Baucis by,
My old lean wife, shall kiss it dry;
And so we 'll sit
By th' fire, foretelling snow and slit
And weather by our aches, grown
Now old enough to be our own

True calendars, as puss's ear
Wash'd o'er 's, to tell what change is near;
Then to assuage
The gripings of the chine by age,
I 'll call my young
Iulus to sing such a song

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

I made upon my Julia's breast,
And of her blush at such a feast.

Then shall he read that flower of mine
Inclosed within a crystal shrine;
 A primrose next;
A piece then of a higher text;
 For to beget
In me a more transcendent heat,
Than that insinuating fire
Which crept into each aged sire

When the fair Helen from her eyes
Shot forth her loving sorceries;
 At which I 'll rear
Mine aged limbs above my chair;
 And hearing it,
Flutter and crow, as in a fit
Of fresh concupiscence, and cry,
"No lust there 's like to poetry."

Thus frantic, crazy man, God wot,
I 'll call to mind things half forgot,
 And oft between
Repeat the times that I have seen;
 Thus ripe with tears,
And twisting my Iulus' hairs,
Doting, I 'll weep and say, "In truth,
Baucis, these were my sins of youth."

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Then next I 'll cause my hopeful lad,
If a wild apple can be had,
 To crown the hearth,
Lar thus conspiring with our mirth;
 Then to infuse
Our browner ale into the cruse,
Which, sweetly spiced, we 'll first carouse
Unto the Genius of the house.

Then the next health to friends of mine,
Loving the brave Burgundian wine,
 High sons of pith,
Whose fortunes I have frolick'd with;
 Such as could well
Bear up the magic bough and spell;
And dancing 'bout the mystic thyrse,
Give up the just applause to verse;

To those, and then again to thee,
We 'll drink, my Wickes, until we be
 Plump as the cherry,
Though not so fresh, yet full as merry
 As the cricket,
The untamed heifer, or the pricket,
Until our tongues shall tell our ears,
We 're younger by a score of years.

Thus, till we see the fire less shine
From th' embers than the kitling's eyne,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

We 'll still sit up,
Sphering about the wassail-cup,
To all those times
Which gave me honor for my rhymes;
The coal once spent, we 'll then to bed,
Far more than night bewearied.

119

PRAY AND PROSPER

FIRST offer incense; then, thy field and
meads
Shall smile and smell the better by thy
beads.
The spangling dew dredg'd o'er the grass
shall be
Turn'd all to mell and manna there for thee.
Butter of amber, cream, and wine, and oil,
Shall run as rivers all throughout thy soil.
Would'st thou to sincere silver turn thy
mold?
Pray once, twice pray, and turn thy
ground to gold.

120

HIS LACRYMÆ, OR MIRTH TURNED TO
MOURNING

CALL me no more,
As heretofore,

96

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

The music of a feast;
Since now, alas!
The mirth that was
In me is dead or ceas'd.

Before I went
To banishment
Into the loathed west,
I could rehearse
A lyric verse,
And speak it with the best.

But time, ah me!
Has laid, I see,
My organ fast asleep,
And turn'd my voice
Into the noise
Of those that sit and weep.

121

A PANEGRIC TO SIR LEWIS PEMBERTON

TILL I shall come again let this suffice;
I send my salt, my sacrifice
To thee, thy lady, younglings, and as far
As to thy Genius and thy Lar;
To the worn threshold, porch, hall, parlor,
kitchen,
The fat-fed smoking temple, which in

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

The wholesome savor of thy mighty chines
Invites to supper him who dines,
Where laden spits, warp'd with large ribs
of beef,

Not represent but give relief
To the lank stranger and the sour swain,
Where both may feed and come again;
For no black-bearded vigil from thy door
Beats with a button'd staff the poor;
But from thy warm love-hatching gates
each may

Take friendly morsels and there stay
To sun his thin-clad members if he likes,
For thou no porter keep'st who strikes.
No comer to thy roof his guest-rite wants,
Or staying there is scourg'd with taunts
Of some rough groom, who, yirkt with
corns, says: "Sir,

You 've dipped too long i' th' vinegar,
And with our broth, and bread, and bits, sir
friend,

You 've fared well. Pray make an end.
Two days you 've larded here; a third, ye
know,

Makes guests and fish smell strong; pray
go

You to some other chimney, and there take
Essay of other giblets; make
Merry at another's hearth—you 're here
Welcome as thunder to our beer.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Manners know distance, and a man unrude
Would soon recoil and not intrude
His stomach to a second meal." No, no!

Thy house well fed and taught can show
No such crabb'd vizard. Thou hast learnt
thy train

With heart and hand to entertain,
And by the armsful, with a breast unhid,
As the old race of mankind did,
When either's heart and either's hand did
strive

To be the nearer relative.
Thou dost redeem those times, and what
was lost

Of ancient honesty may boast
It keeps a growth in thee, and so will run
A course in thy fame's pledge, thy son.
Thus, like a Roman tribune, thou thy gate
Early sets ope to feast and late;
Keeping no currish waiter to affright
With blasting eye the appetite,
Which fain would waste upon thy cates,
but that

The trencher-creature marketh what
Best and more suppling piece he cuts, and by
Some private pinch tells danger 's nigh,
A hand too desp'rate, or a knife that bites
Skin-deep into the pork, or lights
Upon some part of kid, as if mistook,
When checked by the butler's look.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

No, no, thy bread, thy wine, thy jocund
beer

Is not reserved for Trebius here,
But all who at thy table seated are
Find equal freedom, equal fare;
And thou, like to that hospitable god,
Jove, joy'st when guests make their
abode

To eat thy bullock's thighs, thy veals, thy fat
Wethers, and never grudged at,—
The pheasant, partridge, godwit, reeve,
ruff, rail,

The cock, the curlew, and the quail.
These and thy choicest viands do extend
Their taste unto the lower end
Of thy glad table: not a dish more known
To thee than unto any one;
But as thy meat so thy immortal wine
Makes the smirk face of each to shine
And spring fresh rosebuds, while the salt,
the wit,

Flows from the wine and graces it;
While reverence, waiting at the bashful
board,

Honors my lady and my lord.
No scurril jest; no open scene is laid
Here for to make the face afraid;
But temperate mirth dealt forth, and so
discreet-

ly that it makes the meat more sweet,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And adds perfumes unto the wine, which
thou

Dost rather pour forth than allow
By cruse and measure, thus devoting wine
As the Canary Isles were thine,
But with that wisdom and that method,
as

No one that 's there his guilty glass
Drinks of distemper, or has cause to cry
Repentance to his liberty.

No, thou knowest order, ethics, and has
read

All economics, know'st to lead
A house-dance neatly, and canst truly show
How far a figure ought to go,
Forward or backward, sideward, and what
pace

Can give, and what retract a grace;
What gesture, courtship, comeliness agrees

With those thy primitive decrees,
To give subsistence to thy house, and proof
What genii support thy roof,

Goodness and greatness; not the oaken
piles;

For these and marbles have their whiles
To last, but not their ever; virtue's hand

It is which builds 'gainst fate to stand.
Such is thy house, whose firm foundation's
trust

Is more in thee than in her dust

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Or depth. These last may yield and yearly shrink,

When what is strongly built no chink
Or yawning rupture can the same devour,
But fix'd it stands, by her own power
And well-laid bottom, on the iron and rock
Which tries and counter-stands the shock
And ram of time, and by vexation grows
The stronger. Virtue dies when foes
Are wanting to her exercise, but great
And large she spreads by dust and sweat.
Safe stand thy walls and thee, and so both
will,

Since neither's height was rais'd by th' ill
Of others; since no stud, no stone, no piece
Was rear'd up by the poor man's fleece;
No widow's tenement was rack'd to gild
Or fret thy ceiling or to build
A sweating-closet to anoint the silk-
soft skin, or bathe in asses' milk;
No orphans' pittance left him serv'd to set
The pillars up of lasting jet,
For which their cries might beat against
thine ears,

Or in the damp jet read their tears.
No plank from hallowed altar does appeal
To yond Star-Chamber, or does seal
A curse to thee or thine; but all things
even

Make for thy peace and pace to heaven.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Go on directly so, as just men may
A thousand times more swear than say:
This is that princely Pemberton who can
Teach man to keep a god in man;
And when wise poets shall search out to see
Good men, they find them all in thee.

122

TO HIS MAID, PRUE

THESE summer-birds did with thy master
stay
The times of warmth, but then they flew
away,
Leaving their poet, being now grown old,
Expos'd to all the coming winter's cold.
But thou, kind Prue, didst with my fates
abide
As well the winter's as the summer's tide;
For which thy love, live with thy master
here,
Not one, but all the seasons of the year.

123

HOW PANSIES OR HEART'S-EASE CAME FIRST

FROLIC virgins once these were,
Overloving, living here;

103

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Being here their ends denied,
Ran for sweethearts mad, and died.
Love, in pity of their tears,
And their loss in blooming years,
For their restless here-spent hours,
Gave them heart's-ease turn'd to flowers.

124

THE MAD MAID'S SONG

GOOD morrow to the day so fair,
Good morning, sir, to you;
Good morrow to mine own torn hair,
Bedabbled with the dew.

Good morning to this primrose too,
Good morrow to each maid
That will with flowers the tomb bestrew
Wherein my love is laid.

Ah! woe is me, woe, woe is me,
Alack, and welladay!
For pity, sir, find out that bee
Which bore my love away.

I 'll seek him in your bonnet brave,
I 'll seek him in your eyes;
Nay, now I think they've made his grave
I' th' bed of strawberries.

104

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

I 'll seek him there; I know ere this
The cold, cold earth doth shake him;
But I will go or send a kiss
By you, sir, to awake him.

Pray, hurt him not though he be dead,
He knows well who do love him,
And who with green turfs rear his head,
And who do rudely move him.

He 's soft and tender (pray take heed);
With bands of cowslips bind him,
And bring him home; but 't is decreed
That I shall never find him.

125

A PASTORAL SUNG TO THE KING

MONTANO, SILVIO, *and* MIRTILO, *Shepherds*

MON. BAD are the times. SIL. And worse
than they are we.

MON. Troth, bad are both; worse fruit
and ill the tree.

The feast of shepherds fail. SIL. None
crowns the cup

Of wassail now or sets the quintell up;
And he who us'd to lead the country round,
Youthful Mirtillo, here he comes grief-
drown'd.

105

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

AMBO. Let 's cheer him up. SIL. Behold
him weeping-ripe.

MIR. Ah! Amaryllis, farewell mirth and
pipe;

Since thou art gone, no more I mean to
play

To these smooth lawns my mirthful roun-
delay.

Dear Amaryllis! MON. Hark! SIL. Mark!

MIR. This earth grew sweet

Where, Amaryllis, thou didst set thy feet.

AMBO. Poor pitied youth! MIR. And here
the breath of kine

And sheep grew more sweet by that breath
of thine.

This flock of wool and this rich lock of hair,
This ball of cowslips, these she gave me
here.

SIL. Words sweet as love itself. Mon-
tano, hark!

MIR. This way she came, and this way
too she went;

How each thing smells divinely redolent!
Like to a field of beans when newly blown,
Or like a meadow being lately mown.

MON. A sweet-sad passion—

MIR. In dewy mornings when she came
this way

Sweet bents would bow to give my love the
day;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And when at night she folded had her
sheep,
Daisies would shut, and, closing, sigh and
weep.

Besides (ah me!) since she went hence to
dwell,

The voices' daughter ne'er spake syllable.
But she is gone. SIL. Mirtillo, tell us
whether.

MIR. Where she and I shall never meet
together.

MON. Forfend it, Pan, and, Pales, do thou
please

To give an end. MIR. To what? SIL. Such
griefs as these.

MIR. Never, oh, never! Still I may endure
The wound I suffer, never find a cure.

MON. Love for thy sake will bring her to
these hills

And dales again. MIR. No, I will languish
still;

And all the while my part shall be to weep,
And with my sighs, call home my bleating
sheep;

And in the rind of every comely tree
I'll carve thy name, and in that name kiss
thee.

MON. Set with the sun thy woes.

SIL. The day grows old,

And time it is our full-fed flocks to fold.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

CHOR. The shades grow great, but greater
grows our sorrow;
But let 's go steep
Our eyes in sleep,
And meet to weep
To-morrow.

126

THE CROWD AND COMPANY

IN holy meetings there a man may be
One of the crowd, not of the company.

127

TO DAISIES, NOT TO SHUT SO SOON
SHUT not so soon; the dull-ey'd night
Has not as yet begun
To make a seizure on the light,
Or to seal up the sun.

No marigolds yet closed are,
No shadows great appear;
Nor doth the early shepherd's star
Shine like a spangle here.

Stay but till my Julia close
Her life-begetting eye,
And let the whole world then dispose
Itself to live or die.

108

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

128

HOW SPRINGS CAME FIRST

THESE springs were maidens once that
lov'd,
But lost to that they most approv'd.
My story tells by love they were
Turn'd to these springs which we see here;
The pretty whimpering that they make,
When of the banks their leave they take,
Tells ye but this, they are the same,
In nothing chang'd but in their name.

129

TO CENONE

WHAT conscience say is it in thee,
When I a heart had one,
To take away that heart from me,
And to retain thy own?

For shame or pity now incline
To play a loving part;
Either to send me kindly thine,
Or give me back my heart.

Covet not both; but if thou dost
Resolve to part with neither,
Why! yet to show that thou art just,
Take me and mine together.

109

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

130

TO GROVES

YE silent shades, whose each tree here
Some relique of a saint doth wear,
Who, for some sweetheart's sake, did prove
The fire and martyrdom of love,
Here is the legend of those saints
That died for love, and their complaints:
Their wounded hearts and names we find
Encarv'd upon the leaves and rind.
Give way, give way to me, who come
Scorch'd with the selfsame martyrdom,
And have deserv'd as much (love knows)
As to be canoniz'd 'mongst those
Whose deeds and deaths here written
are
Within your greeny calendar.
By all those virgins' fillets hung
Upon your boughs, and requiems sung
For saints and souls departed hence
(Here honor'd still with frankincense);
By all those tears that have been shed,
As a drink-offering to the dead;
By all those true love-knots that be
With mottos carv'd on every tree;
By sweet Saint Phyllis pity me.
By dear Saint Iphis, and the rest
Of all those other saints now blest,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Me, me, forsaken, here admit
Among your myrtles to be writ,
That my poor name may have the glory
To live remembered in your story.

131

AN EPIITAPH UPON A VIRGIN

HERE a solemn fast we keep,
While all beauty lies asleep;
Hush'd be all things; no noise here,
But the toning of a tear,
Or a sigh of such as bring
Cowslips for her covering.

132

UPON JULIA'S HAIR FILL'D WITH DEW

DEW sat on Julia's hair
And spangled too,
Like leaves that laden are
With trembling dew;

Or glitter'd to my sight,
As when the beams
Have their reflected light
Danc'd by the streams.

111

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

133

HIS SAILING FROM JULIA

WHEN that day comes, whose evening says
I 'm gone
Unto that watery desolation,
Devoutly to thy closet-gods then pray,
That my wing'd ship may meet no remora.
Those deities which circumwalk the seas,
And look upon our dreadful passages,
Will from all dangers redeliver me,
For one drink-offering poured out by thee.
Mercy and truth live with thee! and forbear
In my short absence, to unsluice a tear;
But yet for love's sake, let thy lips do this—
Give my dead picture one engendering kiss.
Work that to life, and let me ever dwell
In thy remembrance, Julia. So farewell.

134

TO BLOSSOMS

FAIR pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast?
Your date is not so past
But you may stay yet here awhile,
To blush and gently smile,
And go at last.

112

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

What! were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight,
And so to bid good night?
'T was pity Nature brought ye forth
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave;
And after they have shown their pride
Like you awhile, they glide
Into the grave.

135

TO SIR CLIPSEBY CREW

SINCE to the country first I came,
I have lost my former flame;
And, methinks, I not inherit,
As I did, my ravish'd spirit.
If I write a verse or two,
'T is with very much ado;
In regard I want that wine
Which should conjure up a line.
Yet, though now of muse bereft,
I have still the manners left
For to thank you, noble sir,
For those gifts you do confer

•

113

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Upon him, who only can
Be in prose a grateful man.

136

THE WASSAIL

GIVE way, give way, ye gates, and win
An easy blessing to your bin
And basket, by our entering in.

May both with manchet stand replete;
Your larders, too, so hung with meat,
That though a thousand thousand eat,

Yet, ere twelve moons shall whirl about
Their silvery spheres, there 's none may
doubt
But more 's sent in than was served out.

Next, may your dairies prosper so
As that your pans no ebb may know;
But if they do, the more to flow,

Like to a solemn, sober stream
Bank'd all with lilies, and the cream
Of sweetest cowslips filling them.

Then, may your plants be pres'd with fruit,
Nor bee or hive you have be mute;
But sweetly sounding like a lute.

114

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Next, may your duck and teeming hen
Both to the cock's tread say Amen;
And for their two eggs render ten.

Last, may your harrows, shears, and plows,
Your stacks, your stocks, your sweetest
mows,
All prosper by our virgin vows.

Alas! we bless, but see none here
That brings us either ale or beer;
In a dry house all things are near.

Let 's leave a longer time to wait,
Where rust and cobwebs bind the gate,
And all live here with needy fate,

Where chimneys do forever weep
For want of warmth, and stomachs keep,
With noise, the servants' eyes from sleep.

It is in vain to sing, or stay
Our free feet here; but we 'll away.
Yet to the Lares this we 'll say:

The time will come when you 'll be sad
And reckon this for fortune bad,
T' 'ave lost the good ye might have had.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

137

AN ECLOGUE OR PASTORAL BETWEEN
ENDYMION PORTER AND LYCIDAS HERRICK,
SET AND SUNG

END. AH! Lycidas, come tell me why
Thy whilom merry oat
By thee doth so neglected lie,
And never purls a note?

I prithee speak. LYC. I will. END.
Say on.

LYC. 'T is thou, and only thou,
That art the cause, Endymion.

END. For love's sake, tell me how.

LYC. In this regard: that thou dost play
Upon another plain,
And for a rural roundelay
Strik'st now a courtly strain.

Thou leav'st our hills, our dales, our
bowers,
Our finer fleeced sheep,
Unkind to us, to spend thine hours
Where shepherds should not keep.

I mean the court: let Latmos be
My lov'd Endymion's court.

END. But I the courtly state would see.

LYC. Then see it in report.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

What has the court to do with swains,
Where Phyllis is not known?
Nor does it mind the rustic strains
Of us, or Corydon.

Break, if thou lov'st us, this delay.
END. Dear Lycidas, ere long
I vow, by Pan, to come away
And pipe unto thy song.

Then Jessamine, with Florabell,
And dainty Amaryllis,
With handsome-handed Drosomell,
Shall prank thy hook with lilies.

LYC. Then Tityrus, and Corydon,
And Thyrsis, they shall follow
With all the rest; while thou alone
Shalt lead like young Apollo.

And till thou com'st, thy Lycidas,
In every genial cup,
Shall write in spice: Endymion 't was
That kept his piping up.

And, my most lucky swain, when I shall live
to see
Endymion's moon to fill up full, remember
me:
Meantime, let Lycidas have leave to pipe to
thee.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

138

TO A BED OF TULIPS

BRIGHT tulips, we do know
You had your coming hither,
And fading-time does show
That ye must quickly wither.

Your sisterhoods may stay,
And smile here for your hour;
But die ye must away,
Even as the meanest flower.

Come, virgins, then, and see
Your frailties, and bemoan ye;
For, lost like these, 't will be
As time had never known ye.

139

TO THE WATER-NYMPHS DRINKING AT THE FOUNTAIN

REACH, with your whiter hands, to me
Some crystal of the spring;
And I about the cup shall see
Fresh lilies flourishing.

Or else, sweet nymphs, do you but this,
To th' glass your lips incline;
And I shall see by that one kiss
The water turn'd to wine.

118

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

140

UPON A FLY

A GOLDEN fly one show'd to me,
Clos'd in a box of ivory,
Where both seem'd proud: the fly to have
His burial in an ivory grave;
The ivory took state to hold
A corpse as bright as burnish'd gold.
One fate had both, both equal grace,
The buried, and the burying-place.
Not Vergil's gnat, to whom the spring
All flowers sent to 's burying;
Not Martial's bee, which in a bead
Of amber quick was buried;
Nor that fine worm that does inter
Herself i' th' silken sepulcher;
Nor my rare Phil,¹ that lately was
With lilies tomb'd up in a glass;
More honor had than this same fly,
Dead, and clos'd up in ivory.

141

UPON LOVE

LOVE brought me to a silent grove,
And show'd me there a tree,
Where some had hang'd themselves for love,
And gave a twist to me.

¹ His sparrow.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

The halter was of silk, and gold,
That he reach'd forth unto me,
No otherwise, then if he would
By dainty things undo me.

He bade me then that necklace use;
And told me, too, he maketh
A glorious end by such a noose,
His death for love that taketh.

'T was but a dream; but had I been
There really alone;
My desp'rate fears, in love, had seen
Mine execution.

142

HIS WINDING-SHEET

COME, thou who art the wine and wit
Of all I 've writ,
The grace, the glory, and the best
Piece of the rest.
Thou art of what I did intend
The all and end;
And what was made, was made to meet
Thee, thee, my sheet.
Come, then, and be to my chaste side
Both bed and bride.
We two, as relics left, will have
One rest, one grave.

120

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And, hugging close, we will not fear
 Lust entering here,
Where all desires are dead or cold
 As is the mold;
And all affections are forgot,
 Or trouble not.
Here, here the slaves and pris'ners be
 From shackles free:
And weeping widows long oppress'd
 Do here find rest.
The wronged client ends his laws
 Here, and his cause.
Here those long suits of chancery lie
 Quiet, or die;
And all Star-Chamber bills do cease,
 Or hold their peace.
Here needs no court for our request,
 Where all are best,
All wise, all equal, and all just
 Alike i' th' dust.
Nor need we here to fear the frown
 Of court or crown:
Where Fortune bears no sway o'er things,
 There all are kings.
In this securer place we 'll keep,
 As lull'd asleep;
Or for a little time we 'll lie
 As robes laid by;
To be another day reworn,
 Turn'd, but not torn:

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Or, like old testaments engross'd
 Lock'd up, not lost;
And for a while lie here conceal'd,
 To be reveal'd
Next at that great Platonic year,
 And then meet here.

143

UPON LOVE

I **HELD** Love's head while it did ache;
 But so it chanc'd to be,
The cruel pain did his forsake,
 And forthwith came to me.

Ai me! how shall my grief be still'd?
 Or where else shall we find
One like to me, who must be kill'd
 For being too-too kind?

144

TO PHYLLIS, TO LOVE AND LIVE WITH HIM

LIVE, live with me, and thou shalt see
The pleasures I 'll prepare for thee;
What sweets the country can afford
Shall bless thy bed and bless thy board.
(The soft, sweet moss shall be thy bed
With crawling woodbine overspread;

122

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

By which the silver-shedding streams
Shall gently melt thee into dreams.
Thy clothing, next, shall be a gown
Made of the fleece's purest down.
The tongues of kids shall be thy meat,
Their milk thy drink; and thou shalt eat
The paste of filberts for thy bread,
With cream of cowslips buttered;
Thy feasting-tables shall be hills
With daisies spread and daffodils,
Where thou shalt sit, and redbreast by,
For meat, shall give thee melody.
I'll give thee chains and carcanets
Of primroses and violets.
A bag and bottle thou shalt have,
That richly wrought, and this as brave;
So that as either shall express
The wearer 's no mean shepherdess.
At shearing-times, and yearly wakes,
When Themilis his pastime makes,
There thou shalt be; and be the wit,
Nay, more, the feast, and grace of it.
On holidays, when virgins meet
To dance the heyес with nimble feet,
Thou shalt come forth, and then appear
The queen of roses for that year;
And having danc'd, 'bove all the best,
Carry the garland from the rest.
In wicker baskets maids shall bring
To thee, my dearest shepherdling,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

The blushing apple, bashful pear,
And shamefac'd plum, all simp'ring there.
Walk in the groves, and thou shalt find
The name of Phyllis in the rind
Of every straight and smooth-skin tree;
Where kissing that, I 'll twice kiss thee.
To thee a sheep-hook I will send,
Be-prank'd with ribands to this end;
This, this alluring hook might be
Less for to catch a sheep than me.
Thou shalt have possets, wassails fine,
Not made of ale, but spiced wine,
To make thy maids and self free mirth,
All sitting near the glitt'ring hearth.
Thou shalt have ribands, roses, rings,
Gloves, garters, stockings, shoes, and strings
Of winning colors, that shall move
Others to lust, but me to love.
These, nay, and more, thine own shall be
If thou wilt love, and live with me.

145

TO HIS KINSWOMAN, MISTRESS SUSANNA
HERRICK

WHEN I consider, dearest, thou dost stay
But here awhile, to languish and decay,
Like to these garden glories, which here be
The flowery-sweet resemblances of thee;

124

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

With grief of heart, methinks, I thus do cry,
Would thou hadst ne'er been born, or
mightst not die.

146

THE OLIVE-BRANCH

SADLY I walk'd within the field,
To see what comfort it would yield;
And as I went my private way,
An olive-branch before me lay,
And seeing it, I made a stay.
And took it up, and view'd it; then
Kissing the omen, said Amen:
Be, be it so, and let this be
A divination unto me,
That in short time my woes shall cease,
And love shall crown my end with peace.

147

UPON HIS GRAY HAIRS

FLY me not, though I be gray.
Lady, this I know you 'll say:
Better look the roses red
When with white commingled.
Black your hairs are, mine are white;
This begets the more delight,

125

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

When things meet most opposite:
As in pictures we descry
Venus standing Vulcan by.

148

THE MEADOW VERSE, OR ANNIVERSARY TO MISTRESS BRIDGET LOWMAN

COME with the springtime forth, fair
 maid, and be
This year again the meadow's deity.
Yet ere ye enter, give us leave to set
Upon your head this flowery coronet,
To make this neat distinction from the
 rest;
You are the prime, and princess of the
 feast,
To which, with silver feet lead you the
 way,
While sweet-breath nymphs attend on you
 this day.
This is your hour; and best you may com-
 mand,
Since you are lady of this fairy-land.
Full mirth wait on you; and such mirth as
 shall
Cherish the cheek, but make none blush at
 all.

126

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

The parting Verse, the Feast there ended
Loth to depart, but yet at last, each one
Back must now go to 's habitation;
Not knowing thus much, when we once do
sever,
Whether or no, that we shall meet here
ever.
As for myself, since time a thousand cares
And griefs hath fil'd upon my silver
hairs,
'T is to be doubted whether I next year,
Or no, shall give ye a remeeting here.
If die I must, then my last vow shall be,
You 'll with a tear or two remember me,
Your sometime poet; but if fates do give
Me longer date, and more fresh springs to
live,
Oft as your field shall her old age renew,
Herrick shall make the meadow verse for
you.

149

AN ODE TO SIR CLIPSEBY CREW

HERE we securely live and eat
The cream of meat,
And keep eternal fires,
By which we sit, and do divine
As wine
And rage inspires.

127

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

If full we charm, then call upon
 Anacreon
 To grace the frantic thyrsē;
And having drunk, we raise a shout
 Throughout
 To praise his verse.

Then cause we Horace to be read,
 Which sung, or said,
 A goblet to the brim
Of lyric wine, both swell'd and
 crown'd,
 Around
We quaff to him.

Thus, thus we live, and spend the
 hours
 In wine and flowers,
 And make the frolic year,
The month, the week, the instant day
 To stay
 The longer here.

Come, then, brave knight, and see the
 cell
 Wherein I dwell,
 And my enchantments too,
Which love and noble freedom is;
 And this
Shall fetter you.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Take horse, and come, or be so kind
To send your mind,
Though but in numbers few,
And I shall think I have the heart,
Or part
Of Clipseby Crew.

150

ON HIMSELF

SOME parts may perish, die thou canst not
all:
The most of thee shall 'scape the funeral.

151

ART ABOVE NATURE: TO JULIA

WHEN I behold a forest spread
With silken trees upon thy head;
And when I see that other dress
Of flowers set in comeliness;
When I behold another grace
In the ascent of curious lace,
Which like a pinnacle doth show
The top, and the topgallant too;
Then, when I see thy tresses bound
Into an oval, square, or round,
And knit in knots far more than I
Can tell by tongue, or true-love tie;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Next, when those lawny films I see
Play with a wild civility,
And all those airy silks to flow,
Alluring me, and tempting so;
I must confess mine eye and heart
Dotes less on Nature than on Art.

152

UPON THE LOSS OF HIS FINGER

ONE of the five straight branches of my
hand
Is lopp'd already, and the rest but stand
Expecting when to fall, which soon will be;
First dies the leaf, the bough next, next
the tree.

153

UPON ELECTRA'S TEARS

UPON her cheeks she wept, and from those
showers
Sprang up a sweet nativity of flowers.

154

A HYMN TO THE GRACES

WHEN I love (as some have told,
Love I shall when I am old),

130

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

O ye Graces! make me fit
For the welcoming of it.
Clean my rooms, as temples be,
T' entertain that deity.
Give me words wherewith to woo,
Suppling and successful too;
Winning postures, and, withal,
Manners each way musical;
Sweetness to allay my sour
And unsmooth behavior.
For I know you have the skill
Vines to prune, though not to kill,
And of any wood ye see,
You can make a Mercury.

155

THE POET HATH LOST HIS PIPE

I CANNOT pipe as I was wont to do;
Broke is my reed, hoarse is my singing, too;
My wearied oat I 'll hang upon the tree,
And give it to the sylvan deity.

156

HOW THE WALLFLOWER CAME FIRST, AND WHY SO CALLED

WHY this flower is now call'd so,
List, sweet maids, and you shall know.

131

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Understand, this firstling was
Once a brisk and bonny lass,
Kept as close as Danaë was,
Who a sprightly springal lov'd,
And to have it fully prov'd,
Up she got upon a wall,
Tempting down to slide withal:
But the silken twist untied,
So she fell, and bruise'd, she died.
Love, in pity of the deed,
And her loving, luckless speed,
Turn'd her to this plant we call
Now the Flower of the Wall.

157

THE APPARITION OF HIS MISTRESS CALLING
HIM TO ELYSIUM

Desunt nonnulla—

COME, then, and like two doves with silvery
wings,
Let our souls fly to th' shades where ever
springs
Sit smiling in the meads; where balm and
oil,
Roses and cassia crown the untill'd soil;
Where no disease reigns, or infection comes
To blast the air, but ambergris and gums.

132

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

This, that, and ev'ry thicket doth transpire
More sweet than storax from the hallow'd
fire,

Where ev'ry tree a wealthy issue bears
Of fragrant apples, blushing plums, or
pears;

And all the shrubs, with sparkling span-
gles, show

Like morning sunshine tinseling the dew.
Here in green meadows sits eternal May,
Purfling the margents, while perpetual day
So double gilds the air, as that no night
Can ever rust th' enamel of the light.

Here, naked younglings, handsome strip-
lings, run

Their goals for virgins' kisses; which when
done,

Then unto dancing forth the learned round
Commix'd they meet, with endless roses
crown'd.

And here we'll sit on primrose-banks, and
see

Love's chorus led by Cupid; and we'll be
Two loving followers, too, unto the grove
Where poets sing the stories of our love.
There thou shalt near divine Musæus sing
Of Hero and Leander. Then I'll bring
Thee to the stand where honor'd Homer
reads

His Odysseys and his high Iliads;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

About whose throne the crowd of poets
throng

To hear the incantation of his tongue.

To Linus, then to Pindar; and that done,
I'll bring thee, Herrick, to Anacreon,
Quaffing his full-crown'd bowls of burning
wine,

And in his raptures speaking lines of thine,
Like to his subject; and as his frantic
Looks show him truly Bacchanalian-like
Besmear'd with grapes, welcome he shall
thee thither,

Where both may rage, both drink and
dance together.

Then stately Vergil, witty Ovid, by
Whom fair Corinna sits, and doth comply
With ivory wrists his laureate head, and
steps

His eye in dew of kisses while he sleeps;
Then soft Catullus, sharp-fang'd Martial,
And towering Lucan, Horace, Juvenal,
And snaky Persius, these, and those, whom
rage

(Dropp'd for the jars of Heaven) fill'd t' engage
All times unto their frenzies; thou shalt
there

Behold them in a spacious theater.

Among which glories, crown'd with sacred
bays

And flattering ivy, two recite their plays—

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Beaumont and Fletcher, swans to whom all
ears

Listen, while they, like sirens in their
spheres,

Sing their Evadne; and still more for thee
There yet remains to know than thou canst
see

By glim'ring of a fancy. Do but come,
And there I 'll show thee that capacious
room

In which thy father Jonson now is plac'd,
As in a globe of radiant fire, and grac'd
To be in that orb crown'd, that doth include
Those prophets of the former magnitude,
And he one chief; but hark, I hear the cock
(The bellman of the night) proclaim the
clock

Of late struck one, and now I see the prime
Of day break from the pregnant east: 't is
time

I vanish; more I had to say,
But night determines here, away.

158

LIFE IS THE BODY'S LIGHT

LIFE is the body's light, which once declin-
ing,

Those crimson clouds i' th' cheek and lips
leave shining.

135

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Those counterchanged tabbies in the air
(The sun once set) all of one color are.
So, when Death comes, fresh tinctures lose
their place,
And dismal darkness then doth smutch the
face.

159

LOVE LIGHTLY PLEASED

LET fair or foul my mistress be,
Or low, or tall, she pleaseth me;
Or let her walk, or stand, or sit,
The posture hers, I'm pleas'd with it;
Or let her tongue be still, or stir,
Graceful is everything from her;
Or let her grant, or else deny,
My love will fill each history.

160

THE PRIMROSE

ASK me why I send you here
This sweet Infanta of the year?
Ask me why I send to you
This primrose, thus bepearl'd with dew?
I will whisper to your ears:
The sweets of love are mix'd with tears.

136

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Ask me why this flower does show
So yellow-green, and sickly too?
Ask me why the stalk is weak
And bending (yet it doth not break)?
I will answer: These discover
What fainting hopes are in a lover.

161

CHANGE COMMON TO ALL

ALL things subjected are to fate;
Whom this morn sees most fortunate,
The evening sees in poor estate.

162

TO JULIA

THE saints' bell calls, and, Julia, I must
read;
The proper lessons for the saints now
dead;
To grace which service, Julia, there shall
be
One holy collect said or sung for thee.
Dead when thou art, dear Julia, thou shalt
have
A trental sung by virgins o'er thy grave.

137

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Meantime we two will sing the dirge of
these,
Who, dead, deserve our best remembrances.

163

TO HIS BOOK

BE bold, my book, nor be abash'd, or fear
The cutting thumb-nail or the brow severe;
But by the Muses swear all here is good
If but well read, or, ill read, understood.

164

HIS PRAYER TO BEN JONSON

WHEN I a verse shall make,
Know I have pray'd thee,
For old religion's sake,
Saint Ben, to aid me.

Make the way smooth for me,
When I, thy Herrick,
Honoring thee, on my knee
Offer my lyric.

Candles I 'll give to thee,
And a new altar,
And thou, Saint Ben, shalt be
Writ in my Psalter.

138

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

165

HIS CONTENT IN THE COUNTRY

HERE, here I live with what my board,
Can with the smallest cost afford.
Though ne'er so mean the viands be,
They well content my Prue and me.
Or pea, or bean, or wort, or beet,
Whatever comes, content makes sweet.
Here we rejoice, because no rent
We pay for our poor tenement,
Wherein we rest, and never fear
The landlord, or the usurer.
The quarter-day does ne'er affright
Our peaceful slumbers in the night.
We eat our own, and batten more
Because we feed on no man's score:
But pity those whose flanks grow great,
Swell'd with the lard of others' meat.
We bless our fortunes when we see
Our own beloved privacy,
And like our living, where we 're known
To very few, or else to none.

166

THE BAD SEASON MAKES THE POET SAD

DULL to myself, and almost dead to these
My many fresh and fragrant mistresses;

139

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Lost to all music now, since everything
Puts on the semblance here of sorrow-
ing.
Sick is the land to the heart, and doth en-
dure
More dangerous faintings by her desperate
cure.
But if that golden age would come again,
And Charles here rule, as he before did
reign;
If smooth and unperplex'd the seasons
were,
As when the sweet Maria lived here:
I should delight to have my curls half
drown'd
In Tyrian dews, and head with roses
crown'd;
And once more yet, ere I am laid out
dead,
Knock at a star with my exalted head.

167

TO VULCAN

THY sooty godhead I desire
Still to be ready with thy fire;
That should my book despised be,
Acceptance it might find of thee.

140

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

168

PURPOSES

No wrath of men or rage of seas
Can shake a just man's purposes:
No threats of tyrants or the grim
Visage of them can alter him;
But what he doth at first intend,
That he holds firmly to the end.

169

TO THE MAIDS TO WALK ABROAD

COME, sit we under yonder tree,
Where merry as the maids we 'll be;
And as on primroses we sit,
We 'll venture, if we can, at wit.
If not, at draw-gloves we will play;
So spend some minutes of the day;
Or else spin out the thread of sands,
Playing at questions and commands;
Or tell what strange tricks love can do,
By quickly making one of two.
Thus we will sit and talk, but tell
No cruel truths of Philomel,
Or Phyllis, whom hard fate forc'd on
To kill herself for Demophon.

141

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

But fables we 'll relate: how Jove
Put on all shapes to get a love;
As now a satyr, then a swan,
A bull but then, and now a man.
Next we will act how young men woo,
And sigh, and kiss as lovers do;
And talk of brides, and who shall make
That wedding-smock, this bridal cake,
That dress, this sprig, that leaf, this vine,
That smooth and silken columbine.
This done, we 'll draw lots who shall buy
And gild the bays and rosemary;
What posies for our wedding-rings;
What gloves we 'll give and ribandings;
And smiling at ourselves, decree
Who then the joining priest shall be;
What short, sweet prayers shall be said;
And how the posset shall be made
With cream of lilies, not of kine,
And maiden's blush for spiced wine.
Thus, having talk'd, we 'll next commend
A kiss to each, and so we 'll end.

170

ON HIMSELF

LIVE by thy muse thou shalt, when others
die
Leaving no fame to long posterity.

142

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

When monarchies transshifted are, and
gone,
Here shall endure thy vast dominion.

171

THE NIGHT PIECE, TO JULIA

HER eyes the glow-worm lend thee;
The shooting-stars attend thee;
And the elves also,
Whose little eyes glow
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No will-o'-th'-wisp mislight thee,
Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee;
But on, on thy way,
Not making a stay,
Since ghost there 's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber:
What though the moon does slumber?
The stars of the night
Will lend thee their light
Like tapers clear without number.

Then, Julia, let me woo thee,
Thus, thus to come unto me;
And when I shall meet
Thy silv'ry feet
My soul I 'll pour into thee.

143

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

172

TO HIS VERSES

WHAT will ye, my poor orphans, do
When I must leave the world and you?
Who 'll give ye then a sheltering shed,
Or credit ye when I am dead?
Who 'll let ye by their fire sit,
Although ye have a stock of wit
Already coin'd to pay for it?
I cannot tell, unless there be
Some race of old humanity
Left, of the large heart and long hand,
Alive, as noble Westmoreland,
Or gallant Newark, which brave two
May fostering fathers be to you.
If not, expect to be no less
Ill us'd than babes left fatherless.

173

TO HIS LOVELY MISTRESSES

ONE night i' th' year, my dearest beauties,
come
And bring those dew drink-offerings to my
tomb.
When thence ye see my reverend ghost to
rise,

144

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And there to lick th' effused sacrifice,
Though paleness be the livery that I wear,
Look ye not wan or colorless for fear.
Trust me, I will not hurt ye, or once show
The least grim look, or cast a frown on
you;
Nor shall the tapers when I 'm there burn
blue.
This I may do, perhaps, as I glide by:
Cast on my girls a glance and loving eye,
Or fold mine arms and sigh, because I 've
lost
The world so soon, and in it you the most.
Than these, no fears more on your fancies
fall,
Though then I smile and speak no words
at all.

174

UPON LOVE

A CRYSTAL vial Cupid brought,
Which had a juice in it;
Of which who drank, he said, no thought
Of love he should admit.

I, greedy of the prize, did drink,
And emptied soon the glass;
Which burnt me so that I do think
The fire of Hell it was.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Give me my earthen cups again;
The crystal I contemn,
Which, though enchas'd with pearls,
contain
A deadly draught in them.

And thou, O Cupid! come not to
My threshold, since I see,
For all I have, or else can do,
Thou still wilt cozen me.

175

UPON A CHILD

HERE a pretty baby lies
Sung asleep with lullabies;
Pray be silent, and not stir
Th' easy earth that covers her.

176

FAREWELL, FROST, OR WELCOME THE
SPRING

FLED are the frosts, and now the fields
appear
Recloth'd in fresh and verdant diaper.
Thaw'd are the snows, and now the lusty
spring
Gives to each mead a neat enameling.

146

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

The palms put forth their gems, and every
tree

Now swaggers in her leafy gallantry,
The while the Daulian minstrel sweetly
sings,

With warbling notes, her Terean suffer-
ings.

What gentle winds perspire! As if here
Never had been the Northern plunderer
To strip the trees and fields, to their dis-
tress,

Leaving them to a pitied nakedness.
And look how when a frantic storm doth
tear

A stubborn oak, or holm, long growing
there,

But lull'd to calmness, then succeeds a
breeze

That scarcely stirs the nodding leaves of
trees:

So when this war, which tempest-like doth
spoil

Our salt, our corn, our honey, wine, and
oil,

Falls to a temper, and doth mildly cast
His inconsiderate frenzy off, at last,

The gentle dove may, when these turmoils
cease,

Bring in her bill, once more, the branch of
peace.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

177

THE HAG

THE hag is astride
This night for to ride,
The devil and she together;
Through thick and through thin,
Now out and then in,
Though ne'er so foul be the weather.

A thorn or a bur
She takes for a spur,
With a lash of a bramble she rides now;
Through brakes and through briers,
O'er ditches and mires,
She follows the spirit that guides now.

No beast for his food
Dare now range the wood,
But hush'd in his lair he lies lurking;
While mischiefs, by these,
On land and on seas,
At noon of night are a-working.

The storm will arise
And trouble the skies,
This night, and more for the wonder,
The ghost from the tomb
Affrighted shall come,
Call'd out by the clap of the thunder.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

178

THE COUNTRY LIFE: TO THE HONORED M.
END. PORTER, GROOM OF THE BEDCHAMBER
TO HIS MAJESTY

SWEET country life, to such unknown
Whose lives are others', not their own!
But, serving courts and cities, be
Less happy, less enjoying thee.
Thou never plow'st the ocean's foam
To seek and bring rough pepper home;
Nor to the Eastern Ind dost rove
To bring from thence the scorched clove;
Nor, with the loss of thy lov'd rest,
Bring'st home the ingot from the West.
No, thy ambition's masterpiece
Flies no thought higher than a fleece;
Or how to pay thy hinds, and clear
All scores, and so to end the year;
But walk'st about thine own dear bounds,
Not envying others larger grounds:
For well thou know'st 't is not th' extent
Of land makes life, but sweet content.
When now the cock (the plowman's horn)
Calls forth the lily-wristed morn,
Then to thy corn-fields thou dost go,
Which though well soil'd, yet thou dost know
That the best compost for the lands
Is the wise master's feet and hands.

149

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

There at the plow thou find'st thy team
With a hind whistling there to them;
And cheer'st them up by singing how
The kingdom's portion is the plow.
This done, then to th' enameled meads
Thou go'st, and as thy foot there treads,
Thou seest a present Godlike power
Imprinted in each herb and flower;
And smell'st the breath of great-ey'd kine,
Sweet as the blossoms of the vine.
Here thou behold'st thy large sleek neat
Unto the dewlaps up in meat;
And, as thou look'st, the wanton steer,
The heifer, cow, and ox draw near
To make a pleasing pastime there.
These seen, thou go'st to view thy flocks
Of sheep, safe from the wolf and fox,
And find'st their bellies there as full
Of short sweet grass as backs with wool,
And leav'st them, as they feed and fill,
A shepherd piping on a hill.
For sports, for pageantry and plays
Thou hast thy eves and holidays;
On which the young men and maids meet
To exercise their dancing feet,
Tripping the comely country round,
With daffodils and daisies crown'd.
Thy wakes, thy quintels here thou hast,
Thy May-poles, too, with garlands grac'd;
Thy morris-dance, thy Whitsun ale,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Thy shearing feast which never fail;
Thy harvest-home, thy wassail-bowl,
That 's toss'd up after fox i' th' hole;
Thy mummeries, thy Twelfth-tide kings
And queens, thy Christmas revelings,
Thy nut-brown mirth, thy russet wit,
And no man pays too dear for it.
To these thou hast thy times to go
And trace the hare i' th' treacherous snow;
Thy witty wiles to draw, and get
The lark into the trammel-net;
Thou hast thy cockrood and thy glade
To take the precious pheasant made;
The lime-twigs, snares, and pitfalls then
To catch the pilfering birds, not men.
Oh, happy life! if that their good
The husbandmen but understood!
Who all the day themselves do please,
And younglings, with such sports as these,
And lying down have naught t' affright
Sweet sleep, that makes more short the night.

Caetera desunt—

179 ✓

TO ELECTRA

I DARE not ask a kiss,
I dare not beg a smile,
Lest having that, or this,
I might grow proud the while.

151

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

No, no, the utmost share
Of my desire shall be
Only to kiss that air
That lately kissed thee.

180

TO THE YEW AND CYPRESS, TO GRACE HIS
FUNERAL

BOTH you two have
Relation to the grave,
And where
The fun'ral trump sounds, you are there.

I shall be made
Ere long a fleeting shade:
Pray come,
And do some honor to my tomb.

Do not deny
My last request; for I
Will be
Thankful to you, or friends, for me.

181

A PARANETICAL, OR ADVISIVE VERSE, TO
HIS FRIEND MR. JOHN WICKES

Is this a life, to break thy sleep,
To rise as soon as day doth peep?

152

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

To tire thy patient ox or ass
By noon, and let thy good days pass,
Not knowing this, that Jove decrees
Some mirth t' adulce man's miseries?
No; 't is a life to have thine oil
Without extortion from thy soil;
Thy faithful fields to yield thee grain,
Although with some, yet little, pain;
To have thy mind, and nuptial bed,
With fears and cares uncumbered;
A pleasing wife, that by thy side
Lies softly panting like a bride.
This is to live, and to endear
Those minutes Time has lent us here.
Then, while fates suffer, live thou free
As is that air that circles thee,
And crown thy temples too, and let
Thy servant, not thy own self, sweat,
To strut thy barns with sheaves of wheat.
Time steals away like to a stream,
And we glide hence away with them.
No sound recalls the hours once fled,
Or roses, being withered;
Nor us, my friend, when we are lost,
Like to a dew or melted frost.
Then live we mirthful while we should,
And turn the iron age to gold.
Let 's feast, and frolic, sing, and play,
And thus less last than live our day.
Whose life with care is overcast,

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

That man 's not said to live, but last;
Nor is 't a life, seven years to tell,
But for to live that half seven well;
And that we 'll do, as men who know,
Some few sands spent, we hence must go,
Both to be blended in the urn
From whence there 's never a return.

182

TO DIANE: A CEREMONY IN GLOUCESTER

I 'LL to thee a simnel bring,
'Gainst thou go'st a-mothering:
So that when she blesseth thee,
Half that blessing thou 'lt give me.

183

THE FUNERAL RITES OF THE ROSE

THE rose was sick, and smiling died;
And, being to be sanctified,
About the bed there sighing stood
The sweet and flowery sisterhood.
Some hung the head, while some did bring,
To wash her, water from the spring.
Some laid her forth, while other wept,
But all a solemn fast there kept.
The holy sisters, some among,
The sacred dirge and trental sung.

154

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

But ah! what sweets smelt everywhere,
As Heaven had spent all perfumes there.
At last, when prayers for the dead
And rites were all accomplished,
They, weeping, spread a lawny loom
And clos'd her up, as in a tomb.

184

MEN MIND NO STATE IN SICKNESS

THAT flow of gallants which approach
To kiss thy hand from out the coach;
That fleet of lackeys which do run
Before thy swift postilion;
Those strong-hoof'd mules which we behold
Rein'd in with purple, pearl, and gold,
And shod with silver, prove to be
The drawers of the axletree.
Thy wife, thy children, and the state
Of Persian looms and antique plate;
All these, and more, shall then afford
No joy to thee, their sickly lord.

185

HIS RETURN TO LONDON

FROM the dull confines of the drooping
West
To see the day spring from the pregnant
East,

155

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Ravish'd in spirit I come, nay, more, I fly
To thee, blest place of my nativity!
Thus, thus with hallow'd foot I touch the
ground,

With thousand blessings by thy fortune
crown'd.

O fruitful Genius! that bestowest here
An everlasting plenty, year by year.

O place! O people! Manners! fram'd to
please

All nations, customs, kindreds, languages!

I am a free-born Roman; suffer, then,

That I amongst you live a citizen.

London my home is, though by hard fate
sent

Into a long and irksome banishment;

Yet since call'd back; henceforward let me
be,

O native country, repossess'd by thee!

For, rather than I'll to the West return,

I'll beg of thee first here to have mine urn.

Weak I am grown, and must in short time
fall;

Give thou my sacred relics burial.

186

NOT EVERY DAY FIT FOR VERSE

'T IS not ev'ry day that I
Fitted am to prophesy.

156

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

No; but when the spirit fills
The fantastic pannicles
Full of fire, then I write
As the Godhead doth indite.
Thus enrag'd, my lines are hurled,
Like the Sibyls, through the world.
Look how next the holy fire
Either slakes, or doth retire;
So the fancy cools, till when
That brave spirit comes again.

187

CHARON AND PHILOMEL: A DIALOGUE SUNG

PH. CHARON! O gentle Charon! let me
woo thee
By tears and pity now to come unto me.
CH. What voice so sweet and charming
do I hear?
Say what thou art. PH. I prithee first
draw near.
CH. A sound I hear, but nothing yet can
see;
Speak, where thou art. PH. O Charon, pity
me!
I am a bird, and though no name I tell,
My warbling note will say I 'm Philomel.
CH. What 's that to me? I waft not fish
nor fowls,

157

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Nor beasts (fond thing), but only human
souls.

PH. Alas for me! CH. Shame on thy
witching note

That made me thus hoist sail and bring my
boat:

But I'll return; what mischief brought
thee hither?

PH. A deal of love and much, much grief
together.

CH. What's thy request? PH. That
since she's now beneath

Who fed my life, I'll follow her in death.

CH. And is that all? I'm gone. PH. By
love I pray thee.

CH. Talk not of love; all pray, but few
souls pay me.

PH. I'll give thee vows and tears. CH.
Can tears pay scores

For mending sails, for patching boat and
oars?

PH. I'll beg a penny, or I'll sing so long
Till thou shalt say I've paid thee with a
song.

CH. Why then begin; and all the while
we make

Our slothful passage o'er the Stygian Lake,
Thou and I'll sing to make these dull
shades merry,

Who else with tears would doubtless drown
my ferry.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

188

TO THE GENIUS OF HIS HOUSE

COMMAND the roof, great Genius, and from
thence
Into this house pour down thy influence,
That through each room a golden pipe may
run
Of living water by thy benison.
Fulfil the larders, and with strengthening
bread
Be evermore these bins replenished.
Next, like a bishop consecrate my ground,
That lucky fairies here may dance their
round;
And after that, lay down some silver pence
The master's charge and care to recompense.
Charm then the chambers, make the beds
for ease,
More than for peevish, pining sicknesses.
Fix the foundation fast, and let the roof
Grow old with time but yet keep weather-
proof.

189

HIS GRANGE, OR PRIVATE WEALTH.

THOUGH clock,
To tell how night draws hence, I 've none,
A cock
I have to sing how day draws on.

159

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

I have
A maid, my Prue, by good luck sent
To save
That little Fates me gave or lent.
A hen
I keep, which creaking day by day,
Tells when
She goes her long white egg to lay.
A goose
I have, which with a jealous ear
Lets loose
Her tongue to tell that danger 's near.
A lamb
I keep (tame) with my morsels fed,
Whose dam
An orphan left him (lately dead).
A cat
I keep that plays about my house,
Grown fat
With eating many a miching mouse.
To these
A Tracy ¹ I do keep whereby
I please
The more my rural privacy;
Which are
But toys to give my heart some ease;
Where care
None is, slight things do lightly please.

¹ His pet spaniel.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

190

LOVERS: HOW THEY COME AND PART

A GYGES' ring they bear about them still,
To be, and not seen when and where they
will.

They tread on clouds, and though they
sometimes fall,
They fall like dew, but make no noise at
all.

So silently they one to th' other come,
As colors steal into the pear or plum,
And, air-like, leave no pression to be seen
Where'er they met or parting place has
been.

191

THE APRON OF FLOWERS

To gather flowers Sappha went,
And homeward she did bring
Within her lawny continent
The treasure of the spring.

She smiling blush'd, and blushing smil'd,
And sweetly blushing thus,
She look'd as she 'd been got with child
By young Favonius.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Her apron gave, as she did pass,
An odor more divine,
More pleasing, too, than ever was
The lap of Proserpine.

192

THE WAKE

COME, Anthea, let us two
Go to feast, as others do.
Tarts and custards, creams and cakes,
Are the junkets still at wakes
Unto which the tribes resort,
Where the business is the sport.
Morris-dancers thou shalt see,
Marian, too, in pageantry,
And a mimic to devise
Many grinning properties.
Players there will be, and those
Base in action as in clothes;
Yet with strutting they will please
The incurious villages.
Near the dying of the day
There will be a cudgel-play,
Where a coxcomb will be broke
Ere a good word can be spoke:
But the anger ends all here,
Drench'd in ale, or drown'd in beer.
Happy rustics! best content

162

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

With the cheapest merriment,
And possess no other fear
Than to want the wake next year.

193

UPON JULIA'S CLOTHES

WHENAS in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly
flows
The liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free;
Oh, how that glittering taketh me!

194

A HYMN TO THE MUSES

HONOR to you who sit
Near to the well of wit,
And drink your fill of it.

Glory and worship be
To you, sweet maids (thrice three),
Who still inspire me.

And teach me how to sing
Unto the lyric string
My measures ravishing.

163

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Then while I sing your praise,
My priesthood crown with bays
Green, to the end of days.

195

UPON PRUE, HIS MAID

IN this little urn is laid
Prudence Baldwin, once my maid;
From whose happy spark here let
Spring the purple violet.

196✓

THE INVITATION

To sup with thee thou didst me home in-
vite;
And mad'st a promise that mine appetite
Should meet and tire on such lautitious
meat,
The like not Heliogabalus did eat;
And richer wine wouldst give to me, thy
guest,
Than Roman Sylla pour'd out at his feast.
I came; ('t is true) and look'd for fowl of
price,
The bastard phenix; bird of paradise;

164

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And for no less than aromatic wine
Of maiden's blush commix'd with jessamine.
Clean was the hearth, the mantel larded
jet;
Which wanting Lar, and smoke, hung weeping
wet;
At last, i' th' noon of winter, did appear
A ragg'd sous'd neat's foot with sick
vinegar,
And in a burnish'd flagonet stood by
Beer small as comfort, dead as charity.
At which amaz'd, and pondering on the
food,
How cold it was, and how it chill'd my blood,
I curs'd the master, and I damn'd the
souse,
And swore I 'd got the ague of the house.
Well, when to eat thou dost me next desire,
I 'll bring a fever, since thou keep'st no
fire.

197

A CONJURATION TO ELECTRA

By those soft tods of wool
With which the air is full;
By all those tinctures there,
That paint the hemisphere;

165

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

By dews and drizzling rain
That swell the golden grain;
By all those sweets that be
I' th' flowery nunnery;
By silent nights, and the
Three forms of Hecate;
By all aspects that bless
The sober sorceress,
While juice she strains, and pith,
To make her philters with;
By Time that hastens on
Things to perfection;
And by yourself, the best
Conjurement of the rest:
O my Electra! be
In love with none but me.

198

VERSES

WHO will not honor noble numbers, when
Verses outlive the bravest deeds of men?

199

ORPHEUS

ORPHEUS he went, as poets tell,
To fetch Eurydice from Hell,
And had her; but it was upon
This short but strict condition:

166

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Backward he should not look while he
Led her through Hell's obscurity.
But ah! it happened, as he made
His passage through that dreadful shade,
Revolve he did his loving eye,
For gentle fear or jealousy;
And looking back, that look did sever
Him and Eurydice forever.

200

TO SAPPHO

SAPPHO, I will choose to go
Where the northern winds do blow
Endless ice and endless snow,
Rather than I once would see
But a winter's face in thee
To benumb my hopes and me.

201

THE BRIDE-CAKE

THIS day, my Julia, thou must make
For Mistress Bride the wedding-cake:
Knead but the dough, and it will be
To paste of almonds turn'd by thee;
Or kiss it thou but once or twice,
And for the bride-cake they 'll be spice.

167

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

202

BURIAL

MAN may want land to live in; but for all
Nature finds out some place for burial.

203

THE CLOUD

SEEST thou that cloud that rides in state,
Part ruby-like, part candidate?
It is no other than the bed
Where Venus sleeps half smothered.

204

THE AMBER BEAD

I SAW a fly within a bead
Of amber clearly buried;
The urn was little, but the room
More rich than Cleopatra's tomb.

205

THE TRANSFIGURATION

IMMORTAL clothing I put on
So soon as, Julia, I am gone
To mine eternal mansion.

168

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Thou, thou art here, to human sight
Cloth'd all with incorrupted light;
But yet how more admir'dly bright

Wilt thou appear, when thou art set
In thy refulgent thronelet,
That shin'st thus in thy counterfeit!

206

TO DIANE

I COULD but see thee yesterday
Stung by a fretful bee;
And I the javelin suck'd away,
And heal'd the wound in thee.

A thousand thorns and briers and stings
I have in my poor breast;
Yet ne'er can see that salve which brings
My passions any rest.

As love shall help me, I admire
How thou canst sit and smile
To see me bleed, and not desire
To stanch the blood the while.

If thou, compos'd of gentle mold,
Art so unkind to me
What dismal stories will be told
Of those that cruel be?

169

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

207

UPON A MAID

HERE she lies, in bed of spice,
Fair as Eve in Paradise:
For her beauty it was such
Poets could not praise too much.
Virgins, come, and in a ring
Her supremest requiem sing;
Then depart, but see ye tread
Lightly, lightly o'er the dead.

208

CRUTCHES

THOU seest me, Lucia, this year droop;
Three zodiacs fill'd more, I shall stoop;
Let crutches then provided be
To shore up my debility.
Then, while thou laugh'st, I 'll sighing cry,
A ruin underpropp'd am I.
Don will I then my beadsman's gown;
And when so feeble I am grown
As my weak shoulders cannot bear
The burden of a grasshopper,
Yet with the bench of aged sires,
When I and they keep termly fires,
With my weak voice I 'll sing or say

170

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Some odes I made of Lucia;
Then will I heave my wither'd hand
To Jove the mighty, for to stand
Thy faithful friend, and to pour down
Upon thee many a benison.

209

HOW HIS SOUL CAME ENSNARED

MY soul would one day go and seek
For roses, and in Julia's cheek
A riches of those sweets she found,
As in another Rosamond;
But gathering roses as she was,
Not knowing what would come to pass,
It chanced a ringlet of her hair
Caught my poor soul, as in a snare;
Which ever since has been in thrall—
Yet freedom she enjoys withal.

210

UPON JULIA'S HAIR BUNDLED UP IN A
GOLDEN NET

TELL me, what needs those rich deceits,
These golden toils, and trammel-nets,
To take thine hairs when they are known
Already tame, and all thine own?

171

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

'T is I am wild, and more than hairs
Deserve these meshes and those snares.
Set free thy tresses, let them flow
As airs do breathe or winds do blow:
And let such curious networks be
Less set for them than spread for me.

211

CEREMONIES FOR CANDLEMAS EVE

DOWN with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the mistletoe;
Instead of holly, now upraise
The greener box (for show).

The holly hitherto did sway;
Let box now domineer
Until the dancing Easter day
Or Easter's eve appear.

Then youthful box which now hath grace
Your houses to renew,
Grown old, surrender must his place
Unto the crisped yew.

When yew is out, then birch comes in,
And many flowers beside,
Both of a fresh and fragrant kin,
To honor Whitsuntide.

172

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Green rushes then, and sweetest bents,
With cooler oaken boughs,
Come in for comely ornaments
To readorn the house.

Thus times do shift; each thing his turn
does hold;
New things succeed, as former things grow
old.

212

THE CEREMONIES FOR CANDLEMAS DAY

KINDLE the Christmas brand, and then
Till sunset let it burn;
Which quench'd, then lay it up again
Till Christmas next return.

Part must be kept wherewith to teend
The Christmas log next year,
And where 't is safely kept, the fiend
Can do no mischief there.

213

UPON BEN JONSON

HERE lies Jonson with the rest
Of the poets, but the best.
Reader, wouldst thou more have known?

173

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Ask his story, not this stone.
That will speak what this can't tell
Of his glory: so farewell.

214

AN ODE FOR HIM

AH Ben!
Say how, or when
Shall we thy guests
Meet at those lyric feasts
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tun?
Where we such clusters had
As made us nobly wild, not mad;
And yet each verse of thine
Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.

My Ben!
Or come again,
Or send to us
Thy wit's great overplus;
But teach us yet
Wisely to husband it,
Lest we that talent spend;
And having once brought to an end
That precious stock, the store
Of such a wit the world should have no more.

174

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

215

TO SILVIA

PARDON my trespass, Silvia; I confess
My kiss outwent the bounds of shamefast-
ness:
None is discreet at all times; no, not Jove
Himself, at one time, can be wise and love.

216

TO HIS HONORED AND MOST INGENIOUS
FRIEND, MR. CHARLES COTTON

FOR brave comportment, wit without of-
fense,
Words fully flowing, yet of influence,
Thou art that man of men, the man alone,
Worthy the public admiration;
Who with thine own eyes read'st what we
do write,
And giv'st our numbers euphony and
weight;
Tell'st when a verse springs high, how un-
derstood
To be, or not, born of the royal blood.
What state above, what symmetry below,
Lines have, or should have, thou the best
canst show.

175

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

For which, my Charles, it is my pride to be
Not so much known as to be lov'd of thee.
Long may I live so, and my wreath of bays,
Be less another's laurel than thy praise.

217

HIS LAST REQUEST TO JULIA

I HAVE been wanton and too bold, I fear,
To chafe o'ermuch the virgin's cheek or
ear.

Beg for my pardon, Julia: he doth win
Grace with the gods who 's sorry for his
sin.

That done, my Julia, dearest Julia, come
And go with me to choose my burial room:
My fates are ended; when thy Herrick
dies,

Clasp thou his book, then close thou up his
eyes.

218

TO HIS BOOK

If hap it must, that I must see thee lie
Absyrtus-like, all torn confusedly,
With solemn tears, and with much grief of
heart,

I 'll re-collect thee, weeping, part by part;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And, having wash'd thee, close thee in a
chest
With spice; that done, I 'll leave thee to
thy rest.

219

CEREMONY UPON CANDLEMAS EVE

DOWN with the rosemary, and so
Down with the bays and mistletoe;
Down with the holly, ivy, all,
Wherewith ye dress'd the Christmas hall,
That so the superstitious find
No one least branch there left behind.
For look, how many leaves there be
Neglected, there (maids, trust to me)
So many goblins you shall see.

220

A BUCOLIC BETWIXT TWO: LACON AND
THYRSIS

LACON. FOR a kiss or two, confess,
What doth cause this pensiveness,
Thou most lovely neat-herdess?
Who so lonely on the hill?
Why thy pipe by thee so still,
That erewhile was heard so shrill?
Tell me, do thy kine now fail
To fulfil the milking-pail?
Say, what is 't that thou dost ail?

12

177

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

THYR. None of these; but out, alas!
A mischance is come to pass,
And I 'll tell thee what it was:
See, mine eyes are weeping-ripe.

LACON. Tell, and I 'll lay down my pipe.

THYR. I have lost my lovely steer,
That to me was far more dear
Than these kine which I milk here:
Broad of forehead, large of eye,
Party-color'd like a pie;
Smooth in each limb as a die;
Clear of hoof, and clear of horn,
Sharply pointed as a thorn,
With a neck by yoke unworn;
From the which hung down by strings,
Balls of cowslips, daisy rings,
Interlac'd with ribbonings;
Faultless every way for shape;
Not a straw could him escape;
Ever gamesome as an ape,
But yet harmless as a sheep.
Pardon, Lacon, if I weep;
Tears will spring where woes are deep.
Now, ah me! ah me! Last night
Came a mad dog and did bite,
Aye, and kill'd my dear delight.

LACON. Alack, for grief!

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

THYR. But I 'll be brief.
Hence I must, for time doth call
Me, and my sad playmates all,
To his ev'ning funeral.
Live long, Lacon, so adieu!

LACON. Mournful maid, farewell to you;
Earth afford ye flowers to strew.

221

TO THE HANDSOME MISTRESS GRACE POTTER

AS is your name, so is your comely face
Touch'd everywhere with such diffused
 grace,
As that in all that admirable round
There is not one least solecism found;
And as that part, so every portion else
Keeps line for line with beauty's parallels.

222

UPON LOVE, BY WAY OF QUESTION AND
ANSWER

I BRING ye love. QUEST. What will love do?
 ANS. Like and dislike ye.
I bring ye love. QUEST. What will love do?
 ANS. Stroke ye to strike ye.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

I bring ye love. QUEST. What will love do?

ANS. Love will befool ye.

I bring ye love. QUEST. What will love do?

ANS. Heat ye to cool ye.

I bring ye love. QUEST. What will love do?

ANS. Love gifts will send ye.

I bring ye love. QUEST. What will love do?

ANS. Stock ye to spend ye.

I bring ye love. QUEST. What will love do?

ANS. Love will fulfil ye.

I bring ye love. QUEST. What will love do?

ANS. Kiss ye to kill ye.

223

ANTHEA'S RETRACTATION

ANTHEA laugh'd, and fearing lest excess
Might stretch the cords of civil comeliness,
She with a dainty blush rebuk'd her face,
And call'd each line back to his rule and
space.

224

THE BEGGAR

SHALL I a daily beggar be,
For love's sake asking alms of thee?
Still shall I crave, and never get
A hope of my desired bit?
Ah, cruel maids! I 'll go my way

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Whereas, perchance, my fortunes may
Find out a threshold or a door
That may far sooner speed the poor:
Where thrice we knock, and none will hear,
Cold comfort still I 'm sure lives there.

225

TO ANTHEA

ANTHEA, I am going hence
With some small stock of innocence;
But yet those blessed gates I see
Withstanding entrance unto me;
To pray for me do thou begin—
The porter then will let me in.

226

HIS TEARS TO THAMESIS

I SEND, I send here my supremest kiss
To thee, my silver-footed Thamesis.
No more shall I reiterate thy Strand,
Whereon so many stately structures stand;
Nor in the summer's sweeter evenings go
To bathe in thee as thousand others do;
No more shall I along thy crystal glide
In barge with boughs and rushes beautif'd,
With soft, smooth virgins for our chaste
disport,

181

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

To Richmond, Kingston, and to Hampton
Court.

Never again shall I with finny oar
Put from or draw unto the faithful shore,
And landing here, or safely landing there,
Make way to my beloved Westminster,
Or to the golden Cheapside, where the earth
Of Julia Herrick gave to me my birth.
May all clean nymphs and curious water-
dames

With swan-like state float up and down
thy streams;

No drought upon thy wanton waters fall
To make them lean and languishing at all;
No ruffling winds come hither to disease
Thy pure and silver-wristed Naiades.
Keep up your state, ye streams, and as ye
spring,

Never make sick your banks by surfeiting.
Grow young with tides, and though I see
ye never,

Receive this vow, so fare ye well forever.

227

TO HIS BOOK

TAKE mine advice, and go not near
Those faces, sour as vinegar;
For these and nobler numbers can
Ne'er please the supercilious man.

182

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

228

TO HIS PECULIAR FRIEND, MR. JOHN WICKES

SINCE shed or cottage I have none,
I sing the more, that thou hast one
To whose glad threshold, and free door,
I may a poet come, though poor,
And eat with thee a savory bit,
Paying but common thanks for it.
Yet should I chance, my Wickes, to see
An over-leaven-looks in thee,
To sour the bread, and turn the beer
To an exalted vinegar;
Or should'st thou prize me as a dish
Of thrice-boiled worts, or third-day's fish;
I 'd rather hungry go and come
Than to thy house be burdensome;
Yet, in my depth of grief, I 'd be
One that should drop his beads for thee.

229

ON HIMSELF

WEEP for the dead, for they have lost this
light;
And weep for me, lost in an endless night.
Or mourn, or make a marble verse for
me,
Who writ for many. Benedicite.

183

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

230

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND
MISTRESS ELIZA WHEELER, UNDER THE
NAME OF AMARYLLIS

HER. MY dearest love, since thou wilt go,
And leave me here behind thee,
For love or pity let me know
The place where I may find thee.

AMA. In country meadows pearl'd with
dew,
And set about with lilies,
There, filling maunds with cowslips,
you
May find your Amaryllis.

HER. What have the meads to do with
thee,
Or with thy youthful hours?
Live thou at court, where thou
mayst be
The queen of men, not flowers.

Let country wenches make 'em fine
With posies, since 't is fitter
For thee with richest gems to shine,
And like the stars to glitter.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

AMA. You set too high a rate upon
A shepherdess so homely.

HER. Believe it, dearest, there 's not one
I' th' court that 's half so comely.

I prithee stay. AMA. I must away;
Let 's kiss first, then we 'll sever.

AMBO. And though we bid adieu to-day,
We shall not part forever.

231

TO ANTHEA LYING IN BED

So looks Anthea, when in bed she lies,
O'ercome or half betray'd by tiffanies:
Like to a twilight, or that simpering dawn,
That roses show when misted o'er with
lawn.

Twilight is yet, till that her lawns give way;
Which done, that dawn turns then to perfect day.

232

TO HIS BOOK

MAKE haste away, and let one be
A friendly patron unto thee,
Lest rapt from hence, I see thee lie
Torn for the use of pasterie;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Or see thy injur'd leaves serve well,
To make loose gowns for mackerel;
Or see the grocers in a trice,
Make hoods of thee to serve out spice.

233

ON HIMSELF

A WEARIED pilgrim, I have wandered here
Twice five-and-twenty, bate me but one
year;
Long I have lasted in this world, 't is true,
But yet those years that I have lived, but
few.
Who by his gray hairs doth his lusters tell,
Lives not those years, but he that lives
them well.
One man has reach'd his sixty years, but he
Of all those threescore has not liv'd half
three.
He lives who lives to virtue; men who
cast
Their ends for pleasure, do not live, but
last.

234

GLORY

I MAKE no haste to have my numbers read:
Seldom comes glory till a man be dead.

186

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

235

HIS COVENANT, OR PROTESTATION TO
JULIA

Why dost thou wound and break my heart,
As if we should forever part?
Hast thou not heard an oath from me,
After a day, or two, or three,
I would come back and live with thee?
Take, if thou dost distrust that vow,
This second protestation now.
Upon thy cheek that spangled tear,
Which sits as dew of roses there,
That tear shall scarce be dried before
I 'll kiss the threshold of thy door.
Then weep not, sweet; but this much
know:
I 'm half return'd before I go.

236

UPON HIMSELF

THOU shalt not all die; for while Love's
fire shines
Upon his altar, men shall read thy lines;
And learn'd musicians shall, to honor
Herrick's
Fame, and his name, both set and sing his
lyrics.

187

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

237

THE CARCANET

INSTEAD of Orient pearls, of jet
I sent my love a carcanet.
About her spotless neck she knit
The lace, to honor me, or it:
Then think how rapt was I to see
My jet t' enthrall such ivory.

238

TO HIS BOOK

Go thou forth, my book, though late;
Yet be timely fortunate.
It may chance good luck may send
Thee a kinsman, or a friend,
That may harbor thee, when I
With my fates neglected lie.
If thou know'st not where to dwell,
See, the fire 's by: farewell.

239

ON HIMSELF

THE work is done. Young men and maid-
ens set
Upon my curls the myrtle coronet,

188

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Wash'd with sweet ointments. Thus at last
I come
To suffer in the Muses' martyrdom;
But with this comfort: if my blood be shed,
The Muses will wear blacks when I am
dead.

240

To his book's end this last line he 'd have
placed:
*Jocund his Muse was, but his life was
chaste.*



NOBLE NUMBERS



NOBLE NUMBERS

• 1

HIS CONFESSION

LOOK how our foul days do exceed our fair:
And as our bad more than our good works
are,
Ev'n so those lines, penn'd by my wanton
wit,
Treble the number of these good I 've writ.
Things precious are least numerous: men
are prone
To do ten bad for one good action.

2

HIS PRAYER FOR ABSOLUTION

FOR those my unbaptized rhymes,
Writ in my wild unhallow'd times;
For every sentence, clause, and word
That 's not inlaid with thee, my Lord.
Forgive me, God, and blot each line
Out of my book, that is not thine.
But if, 'mongst all, thou find'st here one
Worthy thy benediction,
That one of all the rest shall be
The glory of my work and me.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

8

GRACE FOR A CHILD

HERE a little child I stand
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat and on us all. Amen.

4

TO HIS CONSCIENCE

CAN I not sin, but thou wilt be
My private prothonotary?
Can I not woo thee, to pass by
A short and sweet iniquity?
I 'll cast a mist and cloud upon
My delicate transgression,
So utter dark, as that no eye
Shall see the hugg'd impiety.
Gifts blind the wise, and bribes do
 please
And wind all other witnesses;
And wilt not thou with gold be tied,
To lay thy pen and ink aside,
That in the mirk and tongueless night,
Wanton I may, and thou not write?

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

It will not be. And therefore, now,
For times to come, I'll make this vow:
From aberrations to live free,
So I'll not fear the Judge, or thee.

5

AN ODE OF THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR

IN numbers, and but these few,
I sing thy birth, O Jesu!
Thou pretty baby, born here,
With sup'rabundant scorn here;
Who for thy princely port here
 Hadst for thy place
 Of birth a base
Out-stable for thy court here.

Instead of neat inclosures
Of interwoven osiers,
Instead of fragrant posies
Of daffodils and roses,
Thy cradle, Kingly Stranger,
 As Gospel tells,
 Was nothing else
But here a homely manger.

But we with silks, not crewels,
With sundry precious jewels,
And lily-work will dress thee;
And as we dispossess thee

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Of clouts, we 'll make a chamber,
Sweet babe, for thee
Of ivory,
And plaister'd round with amber.

The Jews they did disdain thee,
But we will entertain thee
With glories to await here,
Upon thy princely state here;
And more for love than pity,
From year to year,
We 'll make thee, here,
A free-born of our city.

6

HIS LITANY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drown'd in sleep,
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

When the artless doctor sees
No one hope but of his fees,
And his skill runs on the lees,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When his potion and his pill
Has or none or little skill,
Meet for nothing but to kill,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the passing bell doth toll,
And the Furies in a shoal
Come to fright a parting soul,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tapers now burn blue,
And the comforters are few,
And that number more than true,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the priest his last hath prayed,
And I nod to what is said,
'Cause my speech is now decayed,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When, God knows, I'm toss'd about,
Either with despair or doubt,
Yet before the glass be out,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

When the tempter me pursu'th
With the sins of all my youth,
And half damns me with untruth,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the flames and hellish cries
Fright mine ears, and fright mine eyes,
And all terrors me surprise,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the judgment is reveal'd,
And that open'd which was seal'd,
When to thee I have appeal'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

7

THE VIRGIN MARY

To work a wonder, God would have her
shown
At once a bud, and yet a rose full-blown.

8

HIS CREED

I DO believe that die I must,
And be return'd from out my dust;
I do believe that when I rise,
Christ I shall see with these same
eyes;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

I do believe that I must come
With others to the dreadful doom;
I do believe the bad must go
From thence to everlasting woe;
I do believe the good and I
Shall live with him eternally;
I do believe I shall inherit
Heaven by Christ's mercies, not my
 merit;
I do believe the One in Three,
And Three in perfect Unity;
Lastly, that Jesus is a deed
Of gift from God: and here 's my
 creed.

9

A THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE

LORD, thou hast given me a cell
 Wherein to dwell;
And little house, whose humble roof
 Is weather-proof;
Under the spars of which I lie
 Both soft and dry;
Where thou my chamber for to ward
 Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
 Me, while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my fate,
 Both void of state;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And yet the threshold of my door
 Is worn by th' poor,
Who thither come, and freely get
 Good words or meat.
Like as my parlor, so my hall
 And kitchen 's small;
A little buttery, and therein
 A little bin
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
 Unclipp'd, unflead.
Some little sticks of thorn or brier
 Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
 And glow like it.
Lord, I confess, too, when I dine,
 The pulse is thine,
And all those other bits, that be
 There placed by thee;
The worts, the purslane, and the mess
 Of water-cress,
Which of thy kindness thou hast sent;
 And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet,
 To be more sweet.
'T is thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
 With guiltless mirth;
And giv'st me wassail-bowls to drink,
 Spic'd to the brink.
Lord, 't is thy plenty-dropping hand
 That soils my land;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

And giv'st me for my bushel sown,
Twice ten for one.
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
Her egg each day;
Besides my healthful ewes to bear
Me twins each year,
The while the conduits of my kine
Run cream for wine.
All these and better thou dost send
Me, to this end,
That I should render, for my part,
A thankful heart;
Which, fir'd with incense, I resign,
As wholly thine;
But the acceptance, that must be,
My Christ, by thee.

10

ETERNITY

O YEARS! and age! farewell:
Behold, I go
Where I do know
Infinity to dwell.

And these mine eyes shall see
All times, how they
Are lost i' th' sea
Of vast eternity.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Where never moon shall sway
The stars; but she
And night shall be
Drown'd in one endless day.

11

TO GOD, ON HIS SICKNESS

WHAT though my harp and viol be
Both hung upon the willow-tree?
What though my bed be now my grave,
And for my house I darkness have?
What though my healthful days are fled,
And I lie number'd with the dead?
Yet I have hope by thy great power
To spring, though now a wither'd flower.

12

TO KEEP A TRUE LENT

Is this a fast, to keep
The larder lean?
And clean
From fat of veals and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish
Of flesh, yet still
To fill
The platter high with fish?

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Is it to fast an hour,
Or ragg'd to go,
Or show
A downcast look and sour?

No; 't is a fast to dole
Thy sheaf of wheat,
And meat,
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,
From old debate
And hate;
To circumcise thy life;

To show a heart grief-rent;
To starve thy sin,
Not bin;
And that 's to keep thy Lent.

13

TO HIS SWEET SAVIOUR

NIGHT hath no wings to him that cannot
sleep,
And time seems then not for to fly, but
creep;
Slowly her chariot drives, as if that she
Had broke her wheel, or crack'd her axle-
tree.

203

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Just so it is with me, who, list'ning, pray
The winds to blow the tedious night away,
That I might see the cheerful, peeping day.
Sick is my heart! O Saviour! do thou

please

To make my bed soft in my sicknesses;
Lighten my candle, so that I beneath
Sleep not forever in the vaults of death;
Let me thy voice betimes i' th' morning
hear;

Call, and I 'll come; say thou the when and
where.

Draw me but first, and after thee I 'll run,
And make no one stop till my race be done.

14

TO HIS SAVIOUR, A CHILD; A PRESENT, BY A CHILD

Go, pretty child, and bear this flower
Unto thy little Saviour;
And tell him, by that bud now blown,
He is the Rose of Sharon known.
When thou hast said so, stick it there
Upon his bib or stomacher;
And tell him, for good handsel too,
That thou hast brought a whistle new,
Made of a clean straight oaten reed,
To charm his cries at time of need.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Tell him, for coral, thou hast none,
But if thou hadst, he should have one;
But poor thou art, and known to be
Even as moneyless as he.
Lastly, if thou canst win a kiss
From those mellifluous lips of his,
Then never take a second on,
To spoil the first impression.

15

THE DIRGE OF JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER:
SUNG BY THE VIRGINS

O THOU, the wonder of all days!
O paragon, and pearl of praise!
O virgin-martyr, ever blest
 Above the rest
Of all the maiden train! We come,
And bring fresh strewings to thy tomb.

Thus, thus, and thus we compass round
Thy harmless and unhaunted ground;
And as we sing thy dirge, we will
 The daffodil
And other flowers lay upon
The altar of our love, thy stone.

Thou wonder of all maids, liest here,
Of daughters all the dearest dear;

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

The eye of virgins; nay, the queen
 Of this smooth green,
And all sweet meads, from whence we get
The primrose and the violet.

Too soon, too dear did Jephthah buy,
By thy sad loss, our liberty.
His was the bond and cov'nant, yet
 Thou paid'st the debt:
Lamented maid! he won the day,
But for the conquest thou didst pay.

Thy father brought with him along
The olive-branch and victor's song.
He slew the Ammonites, we know,
 But to thy woe;
And in the purchase of our peace,
The cure was worse than the disease.

For which obedient zeal of thine,
We offer here, before thy shrine,
Our sighs for storax, tears for wine;
 And to make fine
And fresh thy hearse-cloth, we will here
Four times bestrew thee ev'ry year.

Receive, for this thy praise, our tears;
Receive this offering of our hairs;
Receive these crystal vials fill'd
 With tears distill'd

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

From teeming eyes: to these we bring,
Each maid, her silver filleting,

To gild thy tomb; besides, these cauls,
These laces, ribbons, and these falls,
These veils, wherewith we use to hide

The bashful bride,

When we conduct her to her groom:
And all we lay upon thy tomb.

No more, no more, since thou art dead,
Shall we e'er bring coy brides to bed;
No more, at yearly festivals

We cowslip balls

Or chains of columbines shall make
For this or that occasion's sake.

No, no; our maiden pleasures be
Wrapp'd in the winding-sheet with thee.
'T is we are dead, though not i' th' grave;

Or, if we have

One seed of life left, 't is to keep
A Lent for thee, to fast and weep.

Sleep in thy peace, thy bed of spice,
And make this place all Paradise.
May sweets grow here; and smoke from
hence

Fat frankincense.

Let balm and cassia send their scent
From out thy maiden-monument.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

May no wolf howl, or screech-owl stir
A wing about thy sepulcher!
No boisterous winds or storms come
hither

To starve or wither
Thy soft sweet earth! but, like a spring,
Love keep it ever flourishing.

May all shy maids, at wonted hours,
Come forth to strew thy tomb with
flow'rs:
May virgins, when they come to mourn,
Male-incense burn
Upon thine altar! then return,
And leave thee sleeping in thy urn.

16

THE WHITE ISLAND, OR PLACE OF THE BLEST

IN this world, the Isle of Dreams,
While we sit by sorrow's streams,
Tears and terrors are our themes,
Reciting;

But when once from hence we fly,
More and more approaching nigh
Unto young eternity,
Uniting

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

In that whiter island where
Things are evermore sincere;
Candor here, and luster there,
Delighting.

There no monstrous fancies shall
Out of Hell an horror call,
To create, or cause at all
Affrighting.

There, in calm and cooling sleep,
We our eyes shall never steep,
But eternal watch shall keep,
Attending

Pleasures such as shall pursue
Me immortalized, and you;
And fresh joys, as never to
Have ending.

17

THE BELLMAN

ALONG the dark and silent night,
With my lantern and my light,
And the tinkling of my bell,
Thus I walk, and this I tell:
Death and dreadfulness call on
To the gen'ral session,
To whose dismal bar we there
All accounts must come to clear.

14

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POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK •

Scores of sins we 've made here many,
Wip'd out few, God knows, if any.
Rise, ye debtors, then, and fall
To make payment while I call.
Ponder this, when I am gone:
By the clock 't is almost one.

18

UPON TIME

TIME was upon
The wing, to fly away,
And I call'd on
Him but awhile to stay;
But he 'd be gone,
For aught that I could say.

He held out then
A writing, as he went,
And ask'd me when
False man would be content
To pay again
What God and Nature lent.

An hour-glass,
In which were sands but few,
As he did pass,
He show'd, and told me, too,
Mine end near was;
And so away he flew.

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POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

19

THE WIDOWS' TEARS, OR DIRGE OF DORCAS

COME pity us, all ye who see
Our harps hung on the willow-tree;
Come pity us, ye passers-by
Who see or hear poor widows cry;
Come pity us; and bring your ears
And eyes to pity widows' tears.

CHOR. And when you are come hither
Then we will keep
A fast, and weep
Our eyes out altogether.

For Tabitha, who dead lies here,
Clean washed, and laid out for the bier,
O modest matrons, weep and wail!
For now the corn and wine must fail:
The basket and the bin of bread,
Wherewith so many souls were fed,

CHOR. Stand empty here forever,
And ah! the poor
At thy worn door
Shall be relieved never.

Woe worth the time, woe worth the day
That 'reaved us of thee, Tabitha!
For we have lost with thee the meal,
The bits, the morsels, and the deal

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

Of gentle paste and yielding dough
That thou on widows did'st bestow.

CHOR. All 's gone, and death hath taken
 Away from us
 Our maundy; thus
Thy widows stand forsaken.

Ah, Dorcas, Dorcas! now adieu
We bid the cruse and pannier too:
Aye, and the flesh, for and the fish
Doled to us in that lordly dish.
We take our leaves now of the loom
From whence the housewives' cloth did
 come,

CHOR. The web affords now nothing;
 Thou being dead,
 The worsted thread
Is cut, that made us clothing.

Farewell the flax and reaming wool
With which thy house was plentiful;
Farewell the coats, the garments, and
The sheets, the rugs, made by thy hand;
Farewell thy fire and thy light
That ne'er went out by day or night:

CHOR. No, or thy zeal so speedy,
 That found a way,
 By peep of day,
To feed and clothe the needy.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

But ah, alas! the almond-bough
And olive-branch is wither'd now.
The wine-press now is ta'en from us,
The saffron and the calamus.
The spice and spikenard hence is gone,
The storax and the cinnamon.

CHOR. The carol of our gladness
Has taken wing,
And our late spring
Of mirth is turned to sadness.

How wise wast thou in all thy ways!
How worthy of respect and praise!
How matron-like didst thou go dressed!
How soberly above the rest
Of those that prank it with their plumes,
And jet it with their choice perfumes!

CHOR. Thy vestures were not flowing;
Nor did the street
Accuse thy feet
Of mincing in their going.

And though thou here li'st dead, we see
A deal of beauty yet in thee.
How sweetly shows thy smiling face,
Thy lips with all-diffused grace!
Thy hands, though cold, yet spotless
white,
And comely as the chrysolite!

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

CHOR. Thy belly like a hill is,
Or as a neat
Clean heap of wheat,
All set about with lilies.

Sleep with thy beauties here, while we
Will show these garments made by thee;
These were the coats, in these are read
The monuments of Dorcas dead.

These were thy acts, and thou shalt have
These hung as honors o'er thy grave;

CHOR. And after us, distressed,
Should fame be dumb,
Thy very tomb
Would cry out, "Thou art blessed!"

20

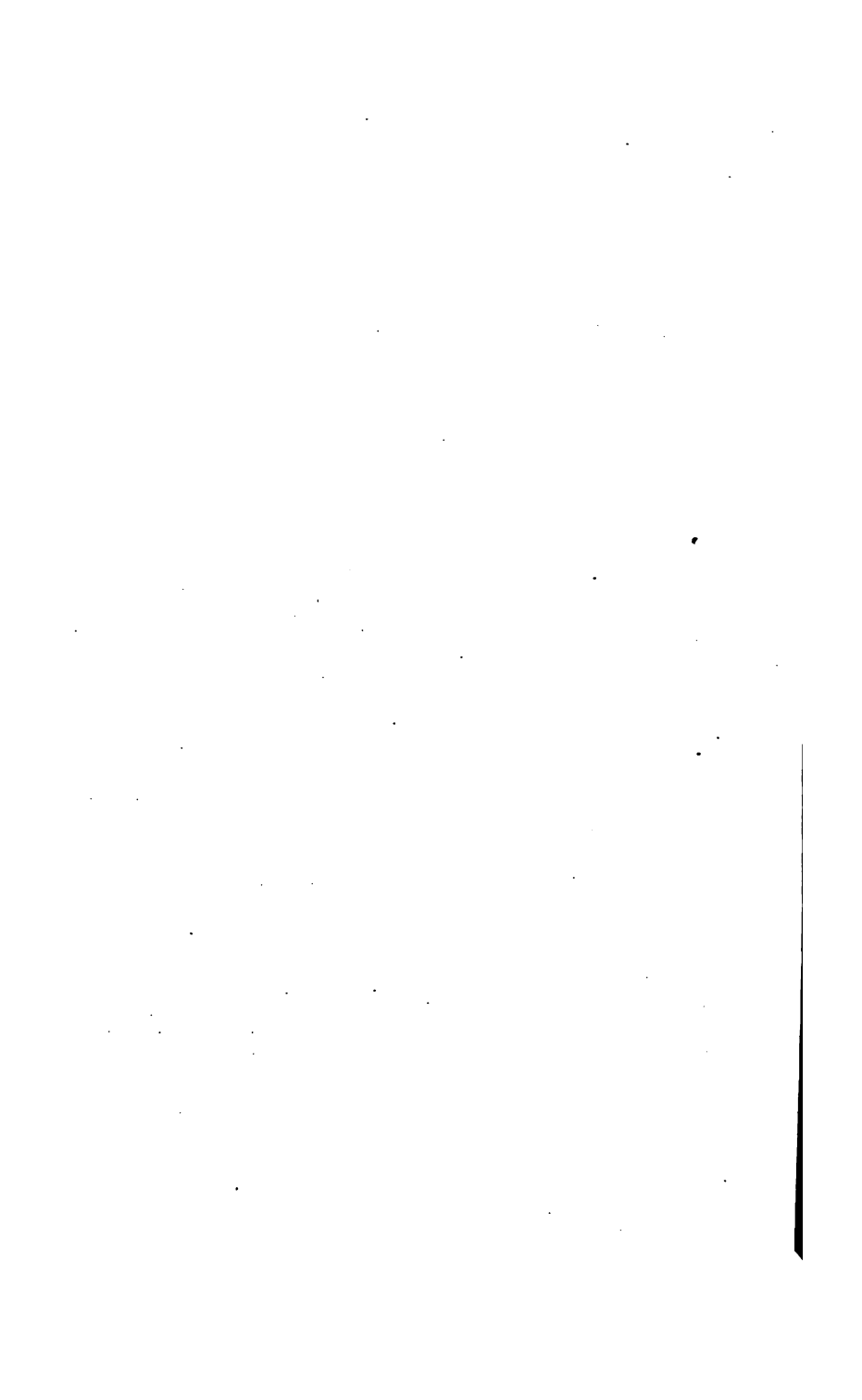
TO DEATH

THOU bid'st me come away,
And I 'll no longer stay
Than for to shed some tears
For faults of former years,
And to repent some crimes
Done in the present times;
And next, to take a bit
Of bread, and wine with it;
To don my robes of love,
Fit for the place above;

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POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

To gird my loins about
With charity throughout;
And so to travel hence
With feet of innocence:
These done, I 'll only cry
God mercy, and so die.



REFERENCES

HESPERIDES

PAGE TITLE

- 1 1 *Hock-cart*, the last cart that comes laden from the
 harvest-field.
- Wakes*, meaning in this case and in other instances
 village festivals of a social or religious character.
- 2 2 *Cotes*, cots, cottages.
- 3 *Candor*, whiteness, purity.
- 4 5 *Thyrse*, "a javelin twined with ivy." (Herrick's foot-
 note.)
- Round*, a rustic dance.
- 6 *Beams*, branches or sprays.
- 5 8 *State*, a canopy.
- 6 11 *Supremest*, the last.
- 7 *Weekly strewings*, of flowers or ferns. The number of
 these strewings was supposed to express the degree
 of love or respect in which the deceased was held.
- 13 *Indecency*, imperfection.
- 8 14 *Dropping*, bleeding.
- 9 15 *Reverend pitcher*, that from which libations were made.
- 14 28 *Gospel tree*, the tree under which, in Rogation Week,
 the parish minister read the gospel.
- Procession*, annual religious procession on the three
 days immediately preceding Ascension Day.
- 15 30 *Lutes of amber*. Old-fashioned musical instruments
 were frequently inlaid with amber.
- 16 34 *Effusions*, drink-offerings, holy sprinklings.
- 17 35 *Infortunity*, ill fortune.
- 22 44 *Dardanium*, "a bracelet, from Dardanus so called."
 (Herrick's foot-note.)
- 26 51 *Brass*, money, now become slang.
- 30 *Lar*, a god of the fireside, closet deity.
- Size*, assize.
- 33 55 *Camlet*, a fabric formerly woven of silk and camel's
 hair.
- 45 69 *Green-gown*, a tumble on the greensward.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

PAGE TITLE

- 49 73 *Scene*, a veil or covering of tissue.
 64 87 *Mab's state*, the queen's state chair or throne.
 65 *Brucke'd*, beamirched, dirty.
Cockal, an ancient game played with sheep's bones instead of dice.
Codlin, formerly any hard green apple used for stewing.
Petuous, tasteful, neat.
Watchet, a shade of blue.
 66 *Hatch'd*, inlaid or engraved.
Bent, a spear of coarse grass or rush.
 67 *Abbey-lubbers*, indolent monks.
Nits, Devonshire for nuts.
 69 88 *Killing eyes*, green, like the eyes of kittens.
Sag, heavy.
Bestrutted, distended, swollen.
 71 90 *Huckson*, knuckle-bone.
 77 99 *Malkin*, a cloth, a baker's clout.
Fill-horse, shaft-horse.
 78 *Fruментy*, wheat boiled in milk and seasoned or flavoured.
 79 101 *Teem'd*, poured out.
 80 102 *Protestant*, Dr. Grosart suggests "protester," which leaves the line only a shade less obscure.
 85 110 *Scare-fires*, alarms of fire, possibly beacon-fires.
 87 115 *Tittyries*, members of a seventeenth-century club of dissolute young fellows of rank who thought it excellent diversion to break windows, overturn sedan-chairs, fight watchmen, and haze peaceful citizens on the London streets at night. The Mohocks of a later period were directly descended from these brawlers of the Tityre Tues. Mr. Pollard was the first annotator to explain the word "tittyries."
Fox-i'-th'-hole, an obsolete game in which boys hopped on one leg and struck at one another with light switches or strips of leather attached to cords.
Shoe the mare, another old English game, usually played at Christmas.
 88 *Liber Pater*, Father Bacchus.
 95 118 *Pricket*, a buck in his second year.
 98 121 *Vigil*, watchman or doorkeeper.
Button'd staff, a staff with knobs.
Yirkt, afflicted.
 99 121 *Suppling*, tender.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

PAGE TITLE

- 105 125 *Quintell*, a tilting-board.
- 112 133 *Remora*, sea-lamprey or suckstone, popularly supposed to cling to the keels of ships and impede their progress.
- 114 136 *Manchet*, white bread of a superior quality.
- 115 *Near*, parsimonious; the word is still used in this sense in some parts of New England.
- 116 137 *Oat*, oaten pipe.
- 117 *Drosomell*, honeydew.
- 123 144 *The heyas*, a country dance.
- 127 148 *Fil'd*, defiled.
- 132 156 *Springal*, stripling.
- 133 157 *Purstring*, trimming, embellishing.
 Margents, bowers, arbors.
- 134 *Comply*, encircle.
- 136 158 *Tubbies*, watered silks.
- 137 162 *Trental*, a service for the dead — properly, thirty-six masses. The word is employed here and in other lyrics as signifying a dirge.
- 141 169 *Draw-gloves*, conversing by finger-signs.
- 142 *Gild the bays*. Gilded branches of bay were used for decoration at weddings.
- 149 178 *Soil'd*, fertilized.
- 151 *Cockrood*, a run for snaring woodcock.
 Glade, an opening in thickets across which nets were stretched.
- 153 181 *Adulce*, sweetened.
 Strut, swell.
- 154 182 *Simnel*, a cake made of fine white flour and brought as a gift, in mid Lent, by grown-up children visiting their parents.
 A-mothering. See preceding note.
- 157 186 *Fantastic pannicles*, cells of the brain.
- 160 189 *Miching*, sly, cunning.
- 164 196 *Lautitious*, dainty, succulent.
- 165 *Larded jet*, blackened.
- 197 *Tods of wool*, clouds.
- 168 203 *Candidate*, clad in white.
- 169 206 *Admire*, wonder. "Season your admiration for a while."—*Hamlet*.
- 173 212 *Teend*, to light, to kindle.
- 178 220 *Pie*, magpie.
- 181 226 *Reiterate*, repace.
- 184 230 *Maunds*, baskets.

POEMS OF ROBERT HERRICK

NOBLE NUMBERS

PAGE TITLE

- 200 9 *Unflead*, unskinned—with crust intact. Dr. Grosart suggests “good, undamaged by mold.” The meaning is not clear.
- 204 14 *Handsel*, propitiatory gift, a pledge.
- 207 15 *Cauls*, nets for confining the hair.
Falls, loose or pendent trimmings.
- 211 19 *Deal*, portion.
- 212 *Maundy*, alms distributed on Thursday in Holy Week.
For and. “An old and originally perhaps intransitive form of ‘and’ or ‘also.’”—Dr. Grosart.
- 213 *Calamus*, flag-root.
Set it, swagger.

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